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THE COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM

DOCUMENTS

By

GEORGE I. GAY

Commission for Relief in Belgium

with the collaboration of

H. H. FISHER

Stanford University

VOLUME
II

STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
STANFORD UNIVERSITY, CALIFORNIA
1929

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PUBLIC RELATIONS OF

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VOLUME
II

Chapter IX

REVIVAL OF BELGIAN INDUSTRY

The siege of the Central Powers did not actually begin until seven months after the outbreak of the war. By that time the short war theory and the hopes of a quick decision by decisive military action had been shattered. On the military fronts the armies had dug in and the war of movement settled down to a war of position. On the home fronts, likewise, governments adopted new tactics, based on the grim realization that victory would rest where the resources of man power, materials, and morale longest endured. Near the end of 1914 Germany placed her food supplies under public control, and Great Britain answered by declaring food contraband. In retaliation for this "hunger blockade" Germany proclaimed a U-boat blockade of the British Isles with the "war zone" decree of the 4th February 1915. Three weeks later (1st March 1915) the British issued the Reprisals Order, with the object of stopping all sea-borne commerce of Germany, whether direct or by neutral ports. Thenceforward the Allies sought continually for new means to stop all holes in the encircling barrier, while the Germans were no less diligent in their efforts to conserve the resources of the Empire and the occupied territories and trust the U-boat to force their enemies to raise the siege.

These siege operations, naturally, had a much more direct bearing on relief than the costly military assaults launched in Galicia, at Verdun, on the Somme, or along the Chemin des Dames. Relief operations were, from the Allied point of view, a concession from the strict blockade; from the German, a limitation on the utilization of the resources, human and material, of the conquered provinces; and the C.R.B. was under severe pressure from hostile groups in both camps. Despite all this, the strength of the Commission steadily grew until by 1917 its international position was so firmly established that it continued to perform all but a few of its functions, although the American declaration of war had ended the neutral status of its chairman and his associates.

The opposition which gathered against every attempt

made after the spring of 1915 to extend the activities of relief shows the growing intensity of the economic war and reveals the pressure on the Commission from both besiegers and besieged. There are many instances in the chapters of the preceding volume—the exchange operations, ship ownership, the control of native produce—and there are even more striking examples in the chapters which follow. In its endeavors to protect Belgian and French civilians from forced labor, the Commission succeeded only in diminishing the severity of German military methods. The attempts to revive Belgian industry and to extend relief to Poland failed, but these failures or partial failures involved no loss of prestige by the Commission. They indicate rather the obstacles to relief which existed after the spring of 1915—obstacles so numerous and formidable that had Hoover relied on temporary expedients, on informal guarantees, until after the siege began, the structure of relief, if it had arisen at all, would have been far less imposing and far less of a protection to the people of Belgium and Northern France.

Every industrialized country in the world was staggered by the sudden disruption of the world trade in August 1914. In every case, with one exception, there came, after a painful period of unemployment and financial stress, a gradual readjustment to the new conditions. Production was adapted to war needs and as long as raw materials were accessible or the reserve supplies lasted, plant and labor were fully employed. The exception was Belgium, perhaps the most completely industrialized state in the world and, with the possible exception of Great Britain, the most dependent upon access to raw materials and markets. The prosperity and well-being of a great majority of the Belgian people depended on the continued operation of their factories, and a majority of these plants looked abroad for the raw or semi-manufactured materials from which they made a finished product.

The German occupation and the Allied blockade strangled Belgian industry. Patriotic industrialists and workers naturally had no intention of manufacturing war materials for sale to the Germans to be used against the Belgian soldiers and their Allies. And there was no other market. Immediately many plants closed. Others, producing goods of a de luxe or demi-luxe character, kept running, but pres-

ently they too began to shut down and the numbers of unemployed grew. The effects of this stagnation on a nation so constituted were far-reaching and serious. From the point of view of the relief organization the chief factors in the situation were:

1. The number of destitute who had to be entirely provided for by relief was greatly increased, thus adding to the heavy financial burdens of the relief organization.[1]

2. An intensification of the social problems of unemployment followed the closing of the factories, and under the abnormal conditions of the occupation there was serious danger of deterioration of the morale of a numerous population unable to support itself and dependent on charity.

The Commission realized that if even limited industrial production could be started not only would the social problem be ameliorated but the financing of relief—always an acute question—would be assisted through the sale abroad of Belgian manufactures. It was for these reasons that the Commission interested itself in an attempt to secure an agreement with the belligerents which would permit the revival of Belgian industry. These negotiations, begun in the summer of 1915, continued for a year and finally broke down when the Germans definitely refused to meet conditions regarded as essential by the British Government. Fundamentally the failure of the project was due to the strengthening of the blockade policy of the British and the intensification of the efforts of the Germans to defeat the blockade by the exploitation of the occupied territories and by the utilization of neutral intermediaries of trade.

1. *Unemployment and Destitution. July–August 1915*

Very soon after the German occupation became established and conditions stabilized after the upheaval of the invasion, certain Belgian industrial interests began to investigate the possibilities of renewing the import of raw materials and the export of finished products. They got into

[1] It should be remembered that those Belgians possessing the means were required to pay at fixed prices for the supplies issued to them. The destitute could not, of course, pay for the supplies they received and their needs were met through the Benevolent Department with funds secured from various sources for the purpose. See chapter xvi and Appendix I.

communication with Dutch interests and also approached the Commission with the idea that raw materials might be brought in under guarantees similar to those respecting food supplies. During the first months of its operations the Commission was deeply involved in securing the diplomatic guarantees, the finance, shipping, and food to defeat the threatened famine and was in no position to take up the industrial question, which was highly complicated and of secondary importance. By the summer of 1915, however, the status of the Commission was such that Hoover felt justified in attempting to work out with the British and German authorities and the Belgian interests an arrangement by which some, at least, of the wheels of Belgian industry could be started. In presenting the matter to the British Foreign Office he pointed out the relation of the industrial to the relief problem, particularly in respect to destitution, which had rapidly increased in the first months of 1915, and to the financing of food imports, which was then in a critical condition. Hoover recommended the acceptance of a proposal worked out in Holland to establish a neutral industrial commission to handle Belgian exports and imports, with the provision that the balances due Belgian individuals, as a result of these operations, be returned to them through the medium of the Commission.

DOCUMENT NO. 388

Letter, HOOVER TO PERCY, *describing the unemployment in Belgium and outlining a plan for the revival of Belgian industry.*

LONDON, 4 July 1915

Lord Eustace Percy
Foreign Office, London

DEAR LORD EUSTACE:

With regard to your request that I should put my representations in regard to the industrial situation in Belgium into the form of a memorandum, I beg to submit the following:

It is not necessary to dilate upon the unparalleled extent of the destitution in Belgium. The destitution is in the main wholly a problem of unemployment, and, moreover, not only is the relief of the destitute a factor of the amount of unemployment but also the whole question of the ravitaillement of Belgium is closely interlinked

with this problem. If certain manufacturing industries could be rehabilitated, if their products could be exported, if the raw material could be imported, not only would the workmen be employed and thus taken off the relief side, but also a monetary balance would be created outside Belgium in favor of that country. If such monetary balances were handed over to this Commission, foodstuffs could be purchased therewith, and these balances paid to their owners in Belgium, in Belgian paper currency, from the food-sale receipts, and thus the problem of the ravitaillement of that portion of the population which could pay for their food could to a large degree be made to revolve upon itself.

It is impossible to estimate that amount of actual unemployment in Belgium. A recent inquiry into certain trades enumerated as unemployed 760,000 men, 270,000 women, with 619,000 children dependents. This census, however, was wholly inadequate as an expression of the entire situation.

This stagnation, which has been practically complete for the last nine months, bids fair to last for a considerable time yet, and the moral and physical deterioration of the working population is already in evidence and must seriously increase.

I am greatly impressed with the sincerity and desire of General von Bissing and his associates in the civil government of the Occupation Zone to get these people back into some kind of occupation.

The most practicable form of occupation is, not on public works or other forms of "relief" labor, but in the industries in which they are normally employed. A considerable number of these industries are engaged upon materials of non-contraband character and if the restrictions placed by the Allies upon overseas export from Belgian territory could be so relaxed that this type of produce could be exported, it is my belief that it would receive no obstruction from the German authorities, who, as I have stated above, are themselves anxious that this unemployment could be reduced. It is useless, however, to consider the problem as merely one of exports because Belgium is not a producer, except in a few minor industries, of raw material.

It is my strongest belief that the proposal from Holland for the creation of a neutral industrial commission which could receive such exports, market them, and could in turn purchase and import raw material for the manufacturers, would not only be a move in the right direction but could be the greatest contribution towards the relaxation of the calls upon our Commission in its work of provisioning the Belgian people. If such an institution were established, I cannot too strongly recommend that it should be stipulated that the sums in balance due to Belgian individuals and firms as the result of their operations, should be handed to this Commission. Furthermore, I believe that it is fundamental that it should be stipulated that the exchange rate should be maintained at 25.40 Belgian francs to the pound and its proper corresponding figure in dollars or guilders. This latter point may appear an unnecessary refinement of detail, but it is much more vital than might appear at first sight.

This Commission is conducting the whole of its transactions in Belgium on the basis of the 25.40 exchange, although the Belgian franc is today quoted at an equivalent of about 30 francs to the pound in Holland. If we were compelled to adopt this depreciated figure of exchange, it would be necessary for us in turn to increase the price of foodstuffs throughout Belgium by over 25 per cent and thus add to the accumulation of misery already existing. If it were insisted on as a condition of the organization of such a neutral body that the balance of sums due Belgium should be handed to us to be paid out by us in Belgium, I believe a considerable portion of the financial problem which we are called upon to face would not only have been solved, but an exchange rate of 25.40 would not affect the intrinsic position of any Belgian industry, for if we increase the price of food by 30 per cent the manufacturers must increase wages. I also consider that it would only be a proper course if it were stipulated that such portions of the exported manufacture which are destined for North and South America, India, or such places as are served by our steamers, should be handed to us for transportation from Dutch ports. As these steamers now return to these ports in ballast, the cost of transporting foodstuffs would be considerably modified by any outward freights which we could obtain.

I should like to mention that I was informed in Holland that one of the objections raised by the Allied Governments against such operations of such a commission was the necessary relaxation of the restrictions as to monetary exchange with foreign countries which such operations involved. If, however, the balance of the sums due to Belgians as the result of the above operations were handed to this Commission and transmitted to Belgium in the form of food the ground for such objection must have disappeared.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) H. C. Hoover, *Chairman*

DOCUMENT NO. 389

Letter and memorandum, Hoover to Percy, *showing the relations of unemployment to relief and suggesting a plan for reviving Belgian industry*

London, 24 August 1915

Lord Eustace Percy
Foreign Office, London

Dear Lord Eustace:

I enclose you herewith a memorandum on the present relief situation in Belgium.

It appears to me that the position in Belgium can only be met by some definite action in the creation of productive employment. This can only be done by stimulating manufacture, and this involves non-contraband exports from Belgium and, of equal importance, the import of necessary raw material.

Aside from its effect on unemployment, and therefore our work in Belgium, the opening of this trade is of importance to the Allied Governments because, whereas we export from this country something like £2,000,000 in money per month to the Western Hemisphere for foodstuffs, the stimulation of exports from Belgium will result in bringing back to this country, under the scheme which I propose, probably a greater sum than this, and any effect which we at present have on an adverse exchange position will have been neutralized.

Subject to further consideration of details I would suggest the following plan, in order to keep within the four corners of the present military situation:

1. An "Industrial Section" of the neutral Commission for Relief in Belgium to be created. Through the Ambassadors who act as Honorary Chairmen of this Commission an agreement will be sought:

a) With the Allied Governments, permitting the importation of non-contraband raw material into Belgium and the exportation of non-contraband manufactured goods made therefrom and from local Belgian raw materials.

b) An agreement with the German authorities by which they undertake not to requisition or in any manner consume the raw material or the products made therefrom and to facilitate the importation and exportation of such material.

2. The neutral Commission for Relief in Belgium to establish a sufficent staff of inspectors, both in and out of Belgium, to see that these guarantees are faithfully complied with, and to provide the necessary machinery otherwise involved.

3. It is proposed to organize each manufacturing industry into a syndicate; that this syndicate should send its own representatives abroad, who would arrange for the purchase and importation of raw material, and for the exportation and sale of the manufactured goods of the syndicate involved.

4. That the difference between the cost of raw material and the realization from manufactured goods should be handed to the Commission, and by them deposited in English banks to the credit of certain Belgian banks until after peace is declared.

5. The Belgian banks in Belgium to undertake to loan to the syndicates in Belgium local paper currency against the security of deposits in London, to a sufficient extent to enable them to pay for their labor and the purchase of local raw material.

Under the above plan there would be no monetary increment into Belgium and a large amount of employment could be created. It is proposed that each type of manufacture should be taken up as

rapidly as it can be organized and as the character of its raw material and exports are approved by the foreign governments.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) H. C. Hoover, *Chairman*

Memorandum on the Present Situation of Relief in Belgium

The relief work in Belgium comprises two entirely distinct and separate problems.

The first is the provisioning of the country with the minimum of supplementary foods to the native production. This is being accomplished through the Commission for Relief in Belgium and the Comité National in joint co-operation at an expenditure of from £1,500,000 to £2,000,000 per month.

The second is the most difficult problem, and arises from the fact that even if food existed in abundance in Belgium, owing to the complete industrial stagnation, the working classes are day by day becoming less able to pay for it, and the problem of caring for them by public charity is assuming financial dimensions entirely beyond any possible compass.

Therefore it is one thing to inject into the country sufficient foodstuffs which if spread equally over the entire population would give them sustenance, but it is entirely another thing to enable the very large section of the community who have no resources either to purchase these foodstuffs for themselves or alternatively for the relief committees to purchase it and distribute it as a matter of charity. Since the occupation of Belgium there has been a gradual tapering off of manufacturing industries, due to the gradual exhaustion of raw material and also the financial exhaustion of the employers. There has been a great effort by the large manufacturers to employ their work people at a certain minimum per week, regardless of their effectiveness, but one by one they have become exhausted and a correspondingly large number of people have been thrown on the responsibility of the relief organizations until it has now reached appalling dimensions, the number of people being assisted today having now reached over 2,750,000. The whole basis of the organized relief is to use the funds secured from abroad to supplement the resources of the local committees and the local relief committees in turn supplement the resources of the individual. At the present time about £1,000,000 per month is being in effect made available from abroad with which to supplement the local committees and in addition to this contribution to the local committees by public benevolence, and from the communal authorities out of taxation furnishes about £200,000 per month. This amount of money, spread over the above members, amounts to less than thirty centimes per diem per capita of destitute, and inasmuch as the very minimum on which life can be preserved is sixty centimes per diem, it is evident that the money now being applied is only supplemental and that with the complete exhaustion of local resources about £2,500,000 a month will be necessary even if the numbers do not increase.

In order to grasp the present situation it is desirable to consider the different classes of the population, which may be divided into:

a) The superior commercial and wealthier classes and their dependents, which comprise approximately 2,250,000 persons. This class in the ordinary course are able to support themselves by drawing on their reserves, given that food supplies are available in the country.

b) The agricultural class and that portion of the population which derives dependence therefrom, the total of which comprises about 1,250,000 people. This class, by virtue of the reservation to them of the present harvest in such a manner that each proprietor retains a sufficiency of seed and food for himself and family throughout the year, the excess being purchased by the relief organization at a good price, are now thus placed in a position of economic security and need give no further anxiety.

c) The industrial workers and that portion of the population dependent upon them, which totals roughly 3,250,000. This class largely comprises the mass out of which the above 2,750,000 are recruited. The whole problem is one of unemployment, and unless some remedy can be found for the productive employment of these people their preservation seems hopeless, because the provision of £2,500,000 a month for their support as stated above is beyond all possible accomplishment.

2. *The Proposed Comité Industriel. September 1915–January 1916*

The Dutch plan, which Hoover had supported, did not receive the approval of the British Government, which stipulated a greater participation by the C.R.B. than the plan provided for, and suggested that the Belgian Minister in London and Hoover work out a new scheme. This was done and the British agreed in principle to the revised plan. With this encouragement, early in October 1915 Hoover renewed discussions of the industrial project with Belgians and Germans in Brussels, and with Francqui prepared a memorandum on the subject for presentation to the German authorities. The chances that the proposal would be accepted were not bright, for Hoover had learned that the Germans were as determined to exclude the Commission[2] from participation in the project as the British were to include it.

[2] It was during the summer and fall of 1915 that the relations between the C.R.B. and the German civil government in Belgium were somewhat strained. The attempt of the Germans to control the relief and the episode of espionage charges are described in Documents 36 to 45, chapter ii.

DOCUMENT NO. 390

Note, British Foreign Office to Belgian Minister in London, *raising objections to the official Belgian plan for industrial revival and laying down certain principles for the whole project*

Foreign Office, London
11 September 1915

His Excellency, Paul Hymans
Belgian Minister, London

Sir:

With reference to your Note No. 3879 of the 20th ultimo regarding exports from and imports into Belgium, I have the honour to inform you that His Majesty's Government are prepared to consider the granting of greater facilities to Belgian trade if a scheme can be devised presenting adequate guarantees.

I do not desire to offer any criticisms of detail on the scheme[3] proposed in your Note under reply, but I desire to point out that that scheme provides no method of co-ordination between imports and exports. It is clear that the best method of guaranteeing that imports of raw material into Belgium are used for no object which could benefit the enemy will be to check the raw material imported by any given industry against the exports of finished products made by that industry. Strict control of this kind will be essential, and I do not see how such control can be in practice exercised unless both imports and exports pass through the hands of the same organisation.

I recognise that the form in which your scheme is proposed arises from the differentiation between exports and imports laid down in my Note of July 31st, but if any considerable imports of raw material are to be allowed, I think that this differentiation must be abandoned and exports and imports must be treated as interdependent.

Further, I am inclined to think that the scheme you propose does not sufficiently provide for that close connection with the Commission for Relief in Belgium and the Comité National which appears necessary if imports and exports are to be regulated on any fixed principle. Some fixed principle must be laid down in order to avoid complaints of discrimination between various industries. In the view of His Majesty's Government there are only three fixed principles on which such a work can be based, namely:

1. That Belgian industry should be enabled, so far as possible, to employ those sections of the industrial population which would otherwise fall and are now falling on the charity dispensed by the Comité National and

2. That Belgian industry should be enabled so far as possible to pay in exports for the foodstuffs imported by the Relief Commission, thus relieving the Belgian Government and the Allied Governments of the financial burden involved by their present contributions to the Commission.

[3] This refers to the Dutch proposal to which reference has been made.

Herbert Hoover, Esquire,
8, London Wall Buildings,
London,E.C.

Enclosure: copy of letter to
Mr. Hoover.

Letter, 18 July 1916, Ambassador Gerard to Hoover

3. That facilities for Belgian exports should not afford an opportunity for the supply by Germany of raw material or half-manufactured materials to Belgian industry, thus in effect opening a market for German exports.

I venture therefore, to suggest that you should reconsider your scheme in consultation with Mr. Hoover with a view to drawing up a detailed plan for submission to the competent authorities of His Majesty's Government who will consult the French Government in the matter.

As you are aware, the general question of Belgian trade has been the subject of many conferences between the office of the Parliamentary Counsel to the Treasury and the Belgian Chamber of Commerce and the views formed on the result of these conferences might well be taken into account in drawing up any such plan. If you so desire, I shall be glad to depute a member of this office to confer with you and Mr. Hoover on the subject and explain more in detail than is possible in written correspondence the general requirements on which His Majesty's Government will feel obliged to insist in any scheme which may be drawn up for their approval.

I have the honour to be, etc.
(*for the Secretary of State*)

(Signed) A. LAW

DOCUMENT NO. 391

Letter, HOOVER TO BELGIAN MINISTER IN LONDON, *describing organization of the Comité Industriel and proposed regulations of its activities to meet requirements of all interested parties*

LONDON, 28 September 1915

His Excellency Paul Hymans
Belgian Minister, London

DEAR MR. HYMANS:

In order to advance the matter of the import of raw material into, and the export of manufactures from Belgium, I desire to lay before you the plan of organization which we believe is best conceived to carry out the desires of all parties. The arrangements which we have carried out and proposed are briefly as follows:

1. A Committee has been organized in Brussels, comprising representatives of various industries, to be known as the Comité Industriel.

This Committee is to be under the patronage of the American, Spanish, and Dutch Ministers and Ambassadors in Brussels, The Hague, and London. In addition to the Belgian members it possibly will include Dutch members and also representatives of the Commission for Relief.

It is proposed that this Committee shall organize agencies in Rotterdam and elsewhere to conduct the commercial phases of its

business and that these agencies should be in truth comprised of the agents of various firms involved.

2. This Committee proposes that the basis of operations shall be the single factory as unit and that the following conditions should surround such a factory:

a) That it should be chosen with regard to the maximum employment of labor from the relief point of view.

b) That the entire output of the factory should be exported.

c) The raw material consumed should be solely of either oversea or undoubted Belgian origin.

d) The German Government shall undertake that such factory be free from requisition or purchase of its raw material, manufactured goods, by-products, plant, or equipment. Its entire personnel to be free from interference and influence by the German authorities.

e) Such factory to be placed under the protection of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, in the same manner as the food warehouses are at present. The whole of the goods to and from Holland of such factory to be transported by the Commission for Relief in Belgium under their flag and protection.

3. The whole of the accounts of export and import operations of the Comité Industriel to be consolidated in their Rotterdam agency:

a) This agency to be under the control of an Auditor to be appointed by (?).

b) Statistical record to be kept to determine the exodus of imported material.

c) At least once a month a balance-sheet is to be drawn up as to the expenditure on imports and the receipts for exports and any excess of receipts over expenditure is to be handed over to the Commission for Relief. The Commission is free to make such counterpayments in Belgium from its local receipts for the sale of foodstuffs as may be convenient to it, at such rate of exchange into Belgian francs as it may determine in conjunction with the Comité Industriel. Any balances over and above such amounts are to be deposited in a neutral bank to be chosen by the Commission for Relief, and a certificate of deposit may be issued by the Commission in favor of the Comité Industriel, such certificate to be cashable only after the declaration of peace. These certificates may be the basis of local loans for payment of wages.

d) The first £10,000 of such deposits to be held by the Commission for Relief as a deposit of good faith by the Comité Industriel on behalf of all factories brought under their patronage in the execution of the requirements here laid down, and violation of any of these requirements shall subject this sum of money to forfeiture as a fine, and to the termination of the entire arrangement, the Comité Industriel in turn to assess this particular sum against any particular factory which shall be at fault.

4. The governments concerned are to issue an approved list of raw materials and manufactures which may be handled by the Comité Industriel, and are to approve the names of the firms to whom patronage is extended by the Comité Industriel.

It seems to me that if the above simple form of organization can be held to, the whole working arrangements will be infinitely more flexible and that the objects of the various authorities will be more nearly accomplished than if we extend our undertakings to a large amount of detail. Under the arrangements above proposed the Allied Governments would possess a number of checks and controls on any violation of their objectives and I may review what these controls amount to:

a) The names of the firms and the character of the material will have to meet the approval of the Allied Governments.

b) The Comité Industriel could collectively have the responsibility for the good conduct of its members.

c) There can be no question as to the jealous desire of the Belgians to comply with the objectives of the Allied Governments.

d) The arrangements proposed will provide that no money, either paper or metallic, will pass over the Belgian frontier.

e) The financial position of the Belgians except as regards the bare employment is in no way benefited by virtue of the financial restrictions proposed.

f) The guarantees asked for from the German authorities are sufficiently wide to cover all objects of the Allied Governments.

g) The proposed incorporation of the Ministers of the various neutral countries and the execution of final arrangements with them greatly strengthens the protection of the Comité Industriel and gives a background of security to the faithful performance of the engagements.

h) The incorporation of neutral members in the executive body of the Comité Industriel gives additional assurance that all the requirements on both sides will be faithfully observed.

i) The transportation and storage of all material being carried out in the name of the Commission for Relief in Belgium gives the actual ownership of this material to a neutral body.

Altogether I do not see that any wider series of protections can be devised than the above. When all is said and done the whole matter will rest on good faith and I believe that all of the men involved on either side in a desire to further this problem and diminish the distressing unemployment in Belgium are acting in no other spirit than that of perfect good faith.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) H. C. Hoover, *Chairman*

DOCUMENT NO. 392

Memorandum (undated but written about 13 October 1915), by Hoover, *describing the progress of negotiations for the revival of Belgian industry and analyzing the alternatives as result of German objections to the participation of the C.R.B.*

The position to be taken in the revival of industrial activity in Belgium by the C.R.B. is set out in the attached memorandum which

I wrote to the Belgian Minister. I also forwarded copy of this memorandum to the members of the Departmental Committee of the English Government, of which Lord Eustace Percy is the head, and I understood from him that, subject to some minor details the Departmental Committee appeared willing to recommend to the Cabinet the acceptance of this project. One of these details was rather a better German guarantee than appears in this memo.

On going to Brussels with this scheme, Mr. Francqui and I drew up a memo quoting this scheme in toto, omitting only the list of assurances which the British Government would have had appear in the latter part of the Hymans memo, and we introduced into the memo which Mr. Francqui and I drew up a prior German guarantee to cover the detail asked for above. This joint memo by Mr. Francqui and myself was to be presented to the German Government on the 11th inst. They had previously had communicated to them, however, the rough details of the same project, at the time of a previous visit to Brussels, and had expressed their general approval in principle.

I am of course unable to anticipate the result of the conference of the 11th inst., but it appeared to me from the information I secured in Belgium that the Germans would object to the C.R.B. participation—and on this general question I have written the attached letter to the Belgian Minister.

I may summarize these alternatives and their ultimate effect as follows:

If the Germans refuse to accept the C.R.B. as the sole transportation agent, the alternatives are:

1. That the Comité Industriel should itself be the consignee of goods in and out of Belgium and in and out of Holland;

2. That a Dutch committee should be set up who would become the consignee in and out of Belgium and in and out of Holland.

I am under the impression that if either one of these alternatives were adopted, the following results would ensue:

a) A second gateway would have been opened into Belgium and Holland for the transit of goods;

b) There would be competition between the C.R.B. and such an organization, for transport facilities, and in this time of dearth of transport there would be a forcing up of prices and a possible crippling of the food supply, which must always take precedence. If, on the other hand, the entire transportation is in the hands of the C.R.B., back-loading can be obtained for lighters and forward-loading can be adjusted to the necessities of the food supply.

c) If the Comité Industriel were set up as the gateway it would only be a short time before the Germans would advance the proposition that the Comité National should also become its own transportation and distributing agent—as they cannot be otherwise than desirous of eliminating all neutral agencies operating in their captured territory. This raises a manifestly serious question as to the whole control of the food supply and its support by the neutral world.

d) The other alternative would be a Dutch committee, which to my mind has two objections, the first being that it gives such a

The King's Library

committee the practical effective control of Belgian industry. The transportation in the hands of the C.R.B. gives the Comité Industriel a free pipe-line to the outer world, which has no objections either as to profit or control of Belgian activities. Second—it sets up a rival organization in the transportation business, as mentioned above; and—third—it seems to me that it would only be a question of time before the German authorities would advance a proposal that such an organization should take over the food supply as well as the work of the Comité Industriel, as they would obviously look upon the Dutch as a more controllable body than the Americans.

I wish it made clear at all times that the one desire of the C.R.B. is to be of service to the civil population of Belgium in its own ultimate interest; that if the crisis should arise that the Germans positively refuse to agree to this extension of the C.R.B. activities and if it is a question of the abandonment of the industrial revival or, alternately, the adoption of either of the above gateways—this is a matter which the Belgians themselves must decide, as to which is to their greatest ultimate interest. We do not wish any sentiment of loyalty to us or any feeling that we would not be pleased to do the best we can under any given circumstances to enter into such a consideration.

From advices which I have had from Brussels since leaving I believe that the tension between the Germans and the C.R.B. is somewhat relaxed, and it may be that the Germans will not be so insistent on the elimination of the C.R.B. element in the Comité Industriel as was my impression when I left Brussels.

As had been feared, the Germans did not accept the proposal as presented in the Hoover-Francqui memorandum. They did not, however, officially and finally reject it or offer counter proposals, but left the matter in the air while they made tentatives in other directions. They offered to provide Belgian industries with raw materials if the Belgians would turn the products over to the Germans. This the Belgians emphatically refused to consider, whereupon the Germans returned to the idea of a neutral industrial committee with which the Commission should have no connection. This also failed, for such a scheme was unacceptable to the British, and to the French, who were lukewarm to the whole idea of attempting to revive Belgian industry on the ground that to permit the import of raw materials would, directly or indirectly, benefit the Germans. In the meantime, in November, while Hoover was in Brussels, there were further conferences, articles of incorporation for the Comité Industriel were prepared, detailed plans of operation were worked out, and a set of guarantees to meet the chief demands of

the British were drawn up. Thus by the end of 1915 the Comité Industriel on paper was ready to begin operations, but on the fundamental issue of the disposition of the value of the exports (i.e., whether the sums received for exports in excess of the necessary expenditures for required raw materials should be turned over to the Commission or deposited in Belgian banks) the British and Germans were as far apart as ever.

DOCUMENT NO. 393

Guarantees to be given by the German authorities respecting the Industrial Committee (Comité Industriel)

[Brussels, November 1915]

In order to promote the revival of Belgian industry a Belgian Industrial Committee whose articles of association are annexed, has been created with the object of importing raw material into Belgium and exporting manufactured products.

The Belgian industries will be divided, according to their class of activity, in syndicates or groups, whose organization and representation in the Association will be ruled by the enclosed articles.

The affiliation to the Association to be approved by the Governor General in Belgium, who retains the right of withdrawing at any time the said approval.

Provided that, under these conditions, the affiliation to the Industrial Association of the different branches of the industry and the works pertaining to them should have been approved by the Governor General, the guarantee is given that raw material imported, in consequence of the present agreement, and finished products resulting therefrom, shall be free from requisition of any kind whatever.

During their affiliation to the Industrial Association, the free use of the existing installations, machinery, and raw material in their possession, as well as the right of disposing without restraint of the working staff necessary for the continuance of the work, will be guaranteed to the manufacturers.

The export of finished products manufactured from said raw material is only allowed (except for products to be indicated afterward, which have no value for war purposes) under the guarantee that these products will not fall into possession of states at war with Germany.

The guarantee that, on one side, imported raw material and finished products resulting therefrom shall not be requisitioned and that, on the other hand, finished products (especially mentioned products excepted) shall not fall into possession of states at war with Germany, shall be assured by a Committee composed of persons of neutral nationality, indicated by the Spanish, United States, and Holland Governments or their representatives in Belgium.

The head office of that Committee will be in Brussels, a main agency to be opened in Rotterdam.

To carry the negotiations with the Industrial Association, with the affiliated syndicates or grouping bodies, and with the neutral Committee, a special department managed by German officers will be created by the Governor General.

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 394

Articles of Association of the Comité Industriel

[BRUSSELS, November 1915]

I. *Object:*

The object of the Industrial Committee is to organize the supplying and supervision of the affiliated Belgian factories by furnishing them full guarantees:

a) For the free import of the raw materials and the export of their products;

b) To make the transfers of funds necessitated by these transactions.

The seat of the Industrial Committee will be in Brussels.

Its activity will be exercised for account of all the industries as if they were a single undertaking, under its management.

No factory can be affiliated without the preliminary authorization of the German Government.

The affiliated works will endeavor to utilize the maximum of labor in order to relieve poverty.

II. *Patronage:*

The Committee to be placed under the patronage of the Ministers of Spain, United States, and Holland, who have already informed the promoters that they have been duly authorized by their respective Governments to give their co-operation to the Belgian manufacturers.

III. *Composition:*

The Committee will include one or several delegates of the different industrial groups and syndicates who will adhere to the present articles and to the regulations here enclosed.

IV. *Brussels Office:*

a) The Industrial Committee will organize a central office in Brussels and regional offices at places where necessary.

b) It will consider all the applications of groups or new syndicates for joining the organization, and after eventual approbation will submit them to the Belgian and English Governments as well as to German authorities.

c) It will keep in continual touch with the delegates of each group or industrial syndicate.

It will centralize all the correspondence of the different groups or industrial syndicates, which will restrain of [refrain from?] corresponding directly with their foreign customers or suppliers.

d) It will supervise the use of raw materials and admit to be worked in the affiliated factories only raw materials originating without doubt from Belgium or neutral countries.

It will see that the products shall, except by special authorization, be sent only to neutral countries and will deliver them to agreed destinations in accordance with the stipulations contained in the present articles and in the annexed regulations.

All the goods forwarded from or to Holland for account of the Industrial Committee will be shipped under the control of the Neutral Committee.

e) It will have to centralize all the accounts relating to imports and exports. For this purpose it will keep general accounts of the receipts in materials, exports of products, and money transfers with foreign countries made for account of affiliated manufacturers or firms.

f) In order to look after the movement of import and export, an office is to be opened at Rotterdam and, if necessary, agencies in the neutral countries to which export will take place.

g) It will look after the strict observance of the regulations here enclosed. These regulations may be modified at any time by decision of a simple majority of the Industrial Committee; each affiliated group or syndicate agreeing, beforehand, to accept the said regulations.

h) It will be empowered to inflict penalties against affiliated manufacturers or firms who will have failed in their engagements.

For this purpose the first million of francs proceeding from the sale of exported products will be appropriated to the guarantee of the engagements taken by the groups or syndicates in forming the Committee.

Every breach of such engagements will expose this sum to be seized by the representatives of the Neutral Committee to the benefit of the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation.

The Neutral Committee may also cause the exclusion of the failing group, syndicate, or factory.

V. *Rotterdam Office:*

a) This office will include one or several delegates of the Industrial Committee.

b) It will be its duty to centralize, under the control of the Neutral Committee, all the movements of the imports and exports oversea or to the neutral countries, as well as the money transfers with foreign countries.

c) For this purpose, it will keep a duplicate set of books showing:

1. Raw materials imported and products exported;

2. Expenses for the purchase of raw materials and proceeds of the sale of products;

3. General expenses.

All these accounts will be audited by a chartered accountant and might be submitted to the inspection of the belligerent Powers.

d) The surplus of receipts over expenses will be deposited monthly in neutral banks, under the control of the Committee of Neutrals, in order to assist eventually the needs of food supplying.

These deposits will be represented by certificates. These certificates can be used, wholly or partly, for the purchase of food for the Belgian people, and this, at an exchange rate in Belgian francs which will be fixed in accordance with the Industrial Committee.

In this case, the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation will remit, to the Industrial Committee, the equivalent in Belgian francs, of the amounts realized on these deposit certificates, and the Industrial Committee will divide them between the beneficiaries of the certificates to whom refer the realized payments.

The amounts not used for food supplies will remain deposited in a neutral bank until the cessation of hostilities and the deposit certificates of these amounts will be remitted to the Industrial Committee, which is authorized to use them as collateral for loans, granted by banks in Belgium, for the payment of salaries.

e) The Rotterdam Office will have to direct to the foreign countries and under the control of the Neutral Committee, all the products exported from Belgium and to ship the imported raw materials to the industries which will be indicated by the central office in Brussels.

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 395

Regulations of the Comité Industriel

[Brussels, November 1915]

1. The Industrial Committee is formed from the delegates of various groups or industrial syndicates who have adhered or will adhere to its articles of association. They are elected for the term of one year and are re-eligible.

2. The Committee's head office is established at the Société Générale de Belgique.

3. The Committee selects among its members a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen. The Chairman and Vice-Chairmen are elected for one year. They are re-eligible.

4. The Committee meets as often as required by its interests and at least once a month upon convocation of the Chairman.

5. All resolutions are taken by the Committee on the ordinary majority of the delegates' votes. In case of division, the Chairman's vote is cast.

6. The Committee is empowered to appoint amongst its members an Executive Committee entrusted with the carrying out of the resolutions taken.

7. The Committee has the most extensive powers for carrying out its object. It takes all necessary steps to this end and has the right to create auxiliary branches in the provinces as well as abroad.

8. The Committee takes under its protection and control the factories of the affiliated groups or syndicates.

9. This protection and this control will affect only the material and products covered by a regular pass and intended to be imported, stored, manufactured, and exported through the adherents.

10. The said adherents bind themselves toward the Committee to observe scrupulously all the stipulations of the diplomatic arrangements agreed upon as to the reception and the use of the imported goods and the products to be exported.

11. The affiliated factories are immediately to inform the Committee of every infringement of the arrangements stated in the previous article.

To this purpose the said factories will establish and send immediately to the Committee a detailed report ascertaining the facts and giving the names and addresses of witnesses whose testimony could be called upon.

12. Whenever the adherents will be in possession of a regular pass they will have to deposit in the cash offices indicated to them for this purpose a security in cash or values agreed upon by the Committee, this security guaranteeing toward the Committee that the adherents will observe every engagement subscribed by them.

In case of breach of these engagements the Committee has the right, by decision indicating the grounds on which it is taken and without appeal, to seize, for the benefit of the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation, the whole or part of the said security.

13. The managers of the syndicated manufacturers bind themselves to inform the Industrial Committee in Brussels of every infringement of the engagements taken toward the Committee by any authority or work in order that they may at once be reported to the Neutral Committee.

14. The adherents bind themselves to accept and pay, within the month of its presentation, the bill for their share in the general expenses of the offices opened by the Committee in Belgium or abroad.

These expenses will be settled in the following manner:

To cover the first general expenses, they will pay a provision of 10 per cent on the amount of capital invested in their business or calculated on such other equitable basis as will be arranged by the Industrial Committee.

The manufacturers having closed contracts through the Industrial Committee will have to deposit 1 per cent of the amount of their transactions to cover the general expenses incurred by the Committee and its agencies.

Should this amount of 1 per cent be insufficient to cover the said general expenses, the Committee will be empowered to debit the balance to the general provision of 10 per cent.

15. Every group or syndicate affiliated will have to deliver to the Industrial Committee a complete scheme of organization that will show especially:

a) The names of the participating firms.

b) The internal regulations of the group.

c) The raw material with their approximate quantities to be monthly imported.

d) The manufactured products to be exported monthly with their approximate quantities.

The internal regulations of the groups or syndicates must clearly show:

a) That every member of the group or syndicate adheres to the principles put down by the Industrial Committee and binds himself to observe them strictly.

b) That all correspondence concerning the importations, exportations, and money transactions must pass through the Industrial Committee.

c) The system of control on imported material and exported products to be established in their factories.

d) The system of bookkeeping.

e) The penalties for infringement on the regulations.

16. The Committee will fix the penalty for breach of the present regulations in every case.

17. The Industrial Committee might, at any time, upon the majority of the groups and syndicates affiliated, modify these regulations.

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 396

Letter, CHEVRILLON TO HOOVER, *describing the opposition of the French General Headquarters to the scheme for the revival of Belgian industry*

PARIS, 5 January 1916

H. C. Hoover, Esq.,
President, The Commission for
Relief in Belgium, London

DEAR HOOVER:

Mr. Francqui will have mentioned to you his conversation in this office with Mr. Nobel, representing the French Army General Headquarters, who, on behalf of General Joffre to whom I have sent our reports, wanted to obtain various details on the work of the Commission and especially wanted to gather information on the scheme for reviving Belgian industries, concerning which the French Government is today consulted by the British.

It seems to be generally understood here that if such a scheme were to come to a head the Commission would be in charge of it, although you remember that I told you that this is not the advice of the French Embassy in London.

I am given to understand confidentially that the advice of the French General Headquarters is not in favor of allowing importations into Belgium. The French view is that there are practically no Belgian industries that might not, directly or indirectly, be made to work to the benefit of the German occupants. The principal Bel-

gian industries, such as metallurgical, steel work, coal mining, textiles, are all out of the question; other industries would relieve the situation only to a very small extent and would further complicate the question of freights which is getting so acute. The French General Staff evidently take the view that the Belgian must endure till the war is over and assert that the principal claim in favor of the scheme, which is that Belgian workmen are emigrating to Germany, is not a correct statement.

I write all this for your guidance, as evidently here the question is going to be decided one way or the other and an answer to the British Government will be given. Should you desire to submit any arguments or observations that might modify the above views it is high time that you should advise me or come over here for this purpose. I notice that Mr. Francqui was very keen on the subject and wonder whether you are of the same mind.

In regard to shoes, I expect to have the export permit at the end of the week.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) L. CHEVRILLON

3. *Failure of Subsequent Negotiations. April 1916–January 1917*

The failure of the Germans to accept the proposals set forth in the preceding documents ended the attempt to revive Belgian industry through the medium of an elaborate organization like the proposed Comité Industriel. In 1916, although there were further negotiations regarding Belgian industry with which the Commission was concerned, new conditions gave these negotiations a different character.

During 1915[4] the German authorities had relaxed their original severe restrictions on Belgian exports and certain industries were allowed to export overseas by way of Holland. The British did not interfere with this activity so long as the value of the exports was deposited in a British bank. A portion of these deposits was released for dispatch to Belgium sufficient to pay the wages of the workmen in the

[4] The principal decrees prohibiting and regulating exports were issued on 26 October 1914 and 25 February 1915, *Bulletin des lois et arrêtés pour le territoire belge occupé*, Nos. 10 and 45. The decrees relaxing these restrictions were issued 1 June 1915, 22 July 1915, and 18 September 1915, *ibid.*, Nos. 84, 101, and 119. A brief account of German economic policy in Belgium is given in Pirenne and Vauthier, *La législation et l'administration allemandes en Belgique*, chapter iv. For a more detailed account, see Kerchove, *L'industrie belge pendant l'occupation de 1914 à 1918.*

factories engaged in producing for this trade. The Commission was not concerned in this arrangement, but when in the spring of 1916 the Germans required Belgian exporters to deposit the full value of the exports, the British threatened to prohibit Belgian oversea export unless the Germans agreed to permit the value of the exports being turned over to the Commission as had been previously proposed in the negotiations regarding the Comité Industriel. The German authorities again did not reply to this proposal but indicated their hostility to it by replacing restrictions on Belgian exports and ultimately prohibiting oversea exports entirely. The matter became a serious one for the Commission when in September 1916 the Foreign Office notified Hoover, through the American Embassy in London, that the British Government would not consider an increase in subventions for relief of which the Commission was greatly in need until the Germans replied to new proposals relative to Belgian exports. Hoover thereupon proposed that the British consent to the continuation of exports and to the return of their total value to Belgium through the medium of the C.R.B. The British agreed, but when Francqui put the proposal before the Germans they flatly rejected it.

DOCUMENT NO. 397

Letter, Lord Robert Cecil to Ambassador Page, *describing the conflicting British and German restrictions on Belgian exports and stating that exports must either be prohibited or their value paid to the C.R.B. for relief purposes*

Foreign Office, London
1 April 1916

To His Excellency Walter Hines Page
American Embassy, London

My dear Ambassador:

You will recollect that last November I approached you unofficially on the subject of the scheme then pending for the importation of raw materials into Belgium under the auspices of the Relief Commission. The German Government having neglected to make any reply to the proposals, I was obliged recently to inform the Belgian Minister of the facts relating to the German policy of exploitation carried on in Belgium and to explain to him the impossible position in which His Majesty's Government are placed by this policy.

This letter was published and shortly afterwards a reply was issued by the German Press Bureau stating that the German Government had been unable to come to a decision on this subject owing to His Majesty's Government having made it a condition that the value of all exports from Belgium should be deposited in a bank in the United Kingdom.

As Your Excellency knows, this statement is false; for the scheme put forward by Mr. Hoover contained no such proposal, but on the contrary provided for the deposit of the value of such exports partly in a neutral bank and partly with the Relief Commission itself to be used for the purchase of foodstuffs.

At present, and for a year past, it is, however, true that in the absence of any definite organisation for Belgian exports and imports, His Majesty's Government have exacted a condition that the value of all articles exported from Belgium under permit from His Majesty's Consul General at Rotterdam shall be deposited in a British bank, only such portions of these deposits being released under licence for despatch to Belgium as are necessary for the payment of wages to the workmen in the factories concerned.

It now appears, however, that the German Government are exacting from Belgian exporters an undertaking that the value of everything they export shall be paid into a bank in Belgium. There is thus created an absolute incompatibility between the requirements of His Majesty's Government and the German Government, and the Belgian industries consequently suffer from a conflict of regulations for which His Majesty's Government must hold the German Government primarily responsible.

There are only two alternatives now before His Majesty's Government. The first is entirely to prohibit all overseas export from Belgium. This His Majesty's Government are for obvious reasons reluctant to do; but while their present regulations afford ample opportunity to Belgian producers to pay their workmen and to conduct their industries, His Majesty's Government cannot possibly accept a system by which these Belgian exports become a means of strengthening Germany by allowing the whole value of them to go into Belgium and to form the object there of the extortionate levies and fines which the German authorities have imposed on the territory they have occupied.

The second alternative is that already offered to the German Government by the Relief Commission, namely, that the value of these exports shall be paid to the Relief Commission and shall be used by them for the purchase of foodstuffs abroad, thus contributing on a business basis towards the work now carried on purely on a basis of charity.

I shall be glad if Your Excellency will take steps to confer with the Relief Commission and to lay this offer before the German authorities in Belgium. If those authorities will not accept it, and will not withdraw the conditions they now exact in the case of all Belgian exports, His Majesty's Government will have no choice but to take steps still further to restrict a trade which furnishes financial resource to the invaders of Belgium. The matter of course is one of

considerable urgency and Mr. Hoover's presence in Brussels may make it possible for Your Excellency to take the question up immediately under favorable conditions.

Yours very truly

(Signed) ROBERT CECIL

DOCUMENT NO. 398

Note, BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE TO U.S. CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES AT LONDON, *refusing to consider an increase in subsidies to the C.R.B. until a reply has been received from the German authorities to the proposal given above*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
23 September 1916

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the United States Chargé d'Affaires and has the honour to refer once again to his letter of April 1st in which he requested Mr. Page to be good enough to take steps to confer with the Relief Commission and lay before the German authorities in Belgium an offer with regard to the conditions under which His Majesty's Government were willing to continue to allow goods to be exported from Belgium.

His Majesty's Government understand from Mr. Hoover of the Commission that he now requires a considerably increased subvention in view of the rise in the price of foodstuffs.[5]

Lord Grey must postpone the consideration of this matter until he is in receipt of the reply to the above-mentioned note, and he would therefore be glad if the United States Chargé d'Affaires will be good enough to take steps to induce the German Government to give an answer without further delay.

DOCUMENT NO. 399

Letter, HOOVER TO LORD EUSTACE PERCY, *referring to the above note and suggesting a solution by requiring that all money derived from exports be translated into Belgium through the medium of the C.R.B. relief operations*

LONDON, 26 September 1916

Lord Eustace Percy
Foreign Office, London

DEAR LORD EUSTACE:

I have received a copy of a dispatch from Earl Grey to the American Ambassador, of the 23d of September, referring to the negotiations with regard to the importation and exportation of industrial material, the last dispatch referred to being that of April 1st.

Before this matter goes forward to Belgium, I would like to make a suggestion that the negotiations leading up to the dispatch of

[5] See Documents 148 to 162, chapter iv.

April 1st implied the importation of raw material into Belgium under elaborate control, and the exportation of manufactures. It seems to me obvious that in the present state of the shipping situation it is out of the question to again advocate the importation of raw material into Belgium.

Under the question of exports of non-contraband industrial material, this has already had a considerable development, as you know. His Majesty's Government agreed to such exports, conditional upon the money being partially impounded in England, and the Germans, on the other hand, have got out an order that no exports can be made unless all the money is translated into Belgium. It would appear to me worth considering whether this business should not be formulated into one by which approved exports are permitted, the whole of the money to be translated into Belgium, but only through the C.R.B. This would obviously considerably increase our commercial exchange, and to whatever extent this took place it would diminish our demands upon the Allied Governments.

I should be glad if you would think the matter over.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 400

Note, FRANCQUI TO DR. BRUHN OF THE DEUTSCHE VERMITTLUNGSTELLE (BRUSSELS), *describing the effect on Belgian industries of German restrictions on export and suggesting an arrangement like that proposed by Hoover to the British Government*

BRUSSELS, 9 October 1916

Monsieur le Docteur Bruhn
Deutsche Vermittlungsstele C.N., Brussels

In accord with the Protecting Ministers the Comité National has the honor to bring to the notice of Doctor Bruhn the negotiations which were previously carried on with a view of obtaining the authorization to export to foreign countries Belgian manufactured products. As Dr. Bruhn knows, the Comité National proposed to organize a syndicate of all the Belgian exporters and suggested the depositing in a bank of a neutral country of all sums resulting from this exportation, it being understood that a part of these sums should be sent to Belgium in order to pay the wages of the workmen and cover the cost of manufacture, that another part should be devoted to the buying in neutral countries of the raw material necessary to Belgian industry, and that the balance would remain on deposit in the aforementioned bank until the signing of peace.

These negotiations have had no sequel. Subsequently, however, the Department of the General Government which occupies itself with Belgian industries authorized certain manufacturers, such as glass-makers, to export their products to foreign countries on condition that the total value of these exports returns to Belgium.

On account of the difficulties encountered in getting this money back into Belgium, the German authorities decided a few weeks ago to no longer allow overseas exports and only to authorize exports to Holland.

As a consequence of this decision the glass works were obliged to close down and pay off their workpeople, thus depriving from earning a living some 150,000 persons, who have become a charge upon charity. The other industries which had been able to take advantage of the authorizations to export which had been granted up to the present time, find themselves in the same case.

In order to reply to the views expressed by the German Government to see the working classes return to their work, the Comité National suggest today that authorizations to export to overseas countries be accorded to Belgian industries, on condition that the Comité National shall pay the manufacturers in full the amount of their invoices; the counterpart of these foreign invoices to be paid into the coffers of the Commission for Relief in Belgium to serve as payment for the foodstuffs bought by it and imported into Belgium through its intervention.

The Comité National is persuaded that its suggestion will be accepted by the English Government; it is likewise convinced that it will be accepted by the German authorities, for the solution which it recognizes responds to the manifest intentions of the Industrial Department of the General Government as far as the permits to export are concerned.

The Comité National will be pleased to receive a reply as soon as possible.

If this solution be admitted, the quantities of provisions imported might be, if not increased, at least maintained at the present figures, notwithstanding the considerable rise in prices.

(Signed) FRANCQUI

The President
The Comité Exécutif

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 401

Extract of letter, PERCY TO POLAND, *emphasizing the importance of the German acceptance of Hoover's proposal and stating the British belief that German policy is to depress Belgian industry in order to force workmen to work for Germany*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
27 October 1916

DEAR MR. POLAND:

. . . . . .

On quite a different matter, I suppose Hoover has gone into Belgium fully realising the importance we attach to the Germans accepting our proposal that the purchase money for all exports from Belgium should be paid over to the Relief Commission. This is of the first importance as we know that the Germans are using their refusal to permit exports except on condition that the whole pur-

chase money for such exports shall be paid into a bank in Belgium as an additional means of forcing Belgian factories to close down in order that the unemployed workmen may be forced to go to work in Germany.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) EUSTACE PERCY

DOCUMENT NO. 402

Letter, BRUHN TO THE COMITÉ NATIONAL, *declining to permit the transfer of the value of exports through the C.R.B.*

BRUSSELS, 23 October 1916

To the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation, Brussels

In continuation of our letter No. 7361 of the 11th inst., it is respectfully stated that that portion of the proposals of Mr. Francqui in his letter of the 9th inst., which refers to the exchange of the value of the permitted exports of the glass industry for foodstuffs through the medium of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, has not been sanctioned. If, and how far, the export of glass may be sanctioned has still to be considered. The decision will be made known to the interested parties.

(Signed) BRUHN

[*Translation*]

There was no further attempt to revive the question of Belgian industrial exports. The effects of the blockade and the shortage of man power had become so acutely felt in Germany that the Government embarked on a thoroughgoing policy of exploitation of the industrial resources and man power of the occupied territories. The most sensational application of this policy in Belgium and Northern France was the institution of forced labor. The Commission's connection with this policy is treated in chapter x.

DOCUMENT NO. 403

Letter, FRANCQUI TO WHITLOCK, *reviewing negotiations with the German authorities and suggesting that the German policy is directed to force Belgians to work for Germany*

BRUSSELS, 26 October 1916

His Excellency the Honorable Brand Whitlock Minister of the United States, Brussels

EXCELLENCY:

Following your letter of the 6th inst., we addressed the German Vermittlungsstelle of the C.N. in a note, copy of which we transmitted to Your Excellency and in which, following the desire mani-

fested by Your Excellency, we suggested that export to oversea countries should be permitted to the manufacturers of the Belgian industries, on the condition that the Comité National should pay fully to these manufacturers the amount of their products; we proposed at the same time that the counter value of these exports abroad should be paid into the account of the Commission for Relief in Belgium to serve as payment for foodstuffs to be bought by them and imported into Belgium under their control.

We were guided in making this proposal by the wish to render possible the labor for Belgian workmen and thus to respond to the views expressed by the Governor-General to see the laboring classes return to their occupations. We had pointed out on this occasion the unhappy situation in which the glass-workers found themselves, condemned to idleness by the prohibition of the German authorities of export other than to Holland. Finally we added that we were persuaded that this suggestion would be acceptable to the British Government.

We have just received in reply to this communication the note, copy of which we attach for Your Excellency.

This note has the more astonished us as the suggestion which we made corresponded entirely to the intentions manifested formerly by the Industrial Department of the General Government as regards the permissions for export.

Also we cannot but remark that this is but one further step in that policy which we have already pointed out on more than one occasion, and which has for obvious intention the reduction of our workmen to an enforced idleness, which will allow the German authorities to employ them, willingly or by force, on work undertaken for their (the German) benefit.

We beg Your Excellency to accept the expression of our highest consideration.

(Signed) FRANCQUI
The President
The Comité Exécutif

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 404

Letter, BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE TO AMBASSADOR PAGE, *describing German regulations on Belgian export and indicating the intention of the British Government to prohibit Belgian oversea export if an assurance is not given that Belgian workmen will not be deported*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
25 January 1917

His Excellency the Honorable W. H. Page
United States Ambassador, London

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

The attention of His Majesty's Government has been called to the fact that the German authorities in Belgium before allowing any

Belgian goods to leave the country insist on the exporters signing an undertaking that the whole amount of the purchase money will be remitted to Belgium and that no part of it will be deposited in the United Kingdom in a blocked account. To make certain that the undertaking is kept the German authorities exact the deposit of a guarantee of twenty per cent of the value of the goods, and at the same time they are levying an export tax of five per cent on old orders and ten per cent on new ones.

In view of the above regulations His Majesty's Government feel that they will not be able to continue allowing the export of Belgian goods to oversea destinations. Before however taking a final decision they desire to know whether, in case they were nevertheless to allow such export to continue, a definite assurance can be obtained that the workmen employed in the Belgian factories where the goods are made shall not be deported to Germany.

I should be grateful if a communication to that effect could be made to the German authorities in Belgium through the American Minister in Brussels.

I have the honour to be, with the highest consideration,

Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

(for the Secretary of State)

(Signed) VICTOR WELLESLEY

Chapter X

FORCED LABOR AND DEPORTATIONS

As has been noted in foregoing pages, the German occupation of Belgium and Northern France and the Allied blockade forced the industrial establishments of these regions to close and caused widespread unemployment. The slender resources of the unemployed were soon exhausted and they became wholly dependent on charitable aid for their support. Without that aid they faced the alternatives of starving or accepting employment offered by the Germans, and so aiding directly or indirectly the enemies of their nation. The Commission endeavored to keep the unemployed from being faced with this decision by increasing the funds available for benevolent distribution and, as has been described in the last chapter, by attempting to work out an arrangement with the belligerents which would permit the resumption of certain industrial activities. Further assistance was given to the workers by employment on public works undertaken by the Communes, and by small subsidies issued to former employees of state enterprises through the "Société Coopérative d'Advance et de Prêts, patronée par le Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation." The German authorities were, of course, fully aware from the beginning of the advantage they would derive if Belgian workers could be seduced or forced to accept German employment, either camouflaged or open. They also recognized that the "secours" or benevolent aid furnished by the relief organizations sustained the workers in their patriotic determination not to work for the enemy. Recognition of this fact was the chief reason behind the German effort in 1915 to get control of relief distribution.[1] It also explains the Germans' lack of enthusiasm for the industrial revival project discussed in the preceding chapter.

1. *Belgian Workers and German Employment. November 1914–March 1916*

During the first months of the occupation, before the shortage of man power had begun to be felt in Germany,

[1] For this episode see chapter ii, Documents 32 to 40.

the occupation authorities made no overt attempt to compel the Belgians to work for them.[2] They confined themselves to decreeing that no pressure should be used to restrain Belgians from accepting German employment, to offering high wages, and to efforts to manipulate relief in such a fashion that the resistance of the workers to German blandishments would be weakened.

Under pressure, the Germans abandoned the attempt to control relief, and in reply to a letter[3] drafted by Hoover, Villalobar, and Whitlock, they agreed not to use the relief organizations to compel Belgians to accept employment that would benefit the German Army. This, of course, did not settle the matter. The occupation authorities assumed that they alone were competent to decide whether a particular type of employment was for the benefit of the Imperial Army or "in the public interest," and they decreed that Belgians who refused employment described by the German authority as in the public interest should be imprisoned for not more than one year. The Belgians naturally could not accept in many cases the German interpretation of "the public interest," and, as in the Lessines case (Documents 410 and 411), they refused to work and went to prison.

DOCUMENT NO. 405

German decree, establishing that the Central Allies are not in a judicial sense foreign or enemy powers for the occupied territory of Belgium, and making interference with labor for the German authorities a punishable offense.[4]

BRUSSELS, 19 November 1914

ARTICLE 1

The German Empire, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey are not to be considered, for the occupied territory of Belgium, as foreign powers or enemies in the sense defined in Articles 113 ff. of the Belgian Penal Code and by the statute of August 4, 1914 [Statute concerning crimes and offences against the External Security of the State].

[2] The situation in Northern France, as has been noted in earlier chapters, differed from that in Belgium in many respects. The issue of forced labor arose there under different circumstances. The sensational episode of the deportations from Lille and the Commission's intervention are covered by Documents 433 to 435 in this chapter. See also chapter vi, Document 288, for another aspect of this matter.

[3] Document 407. Full text is given in Document 344, chapter viii.

[4] From *Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für die okkupierten Gebiete Belgiens,* No. 17, December 1, 1914, p. 57.

ARTICLE 2

Any one who undertakes, by force, threats, persuasion, or other means, to restrain those willing to work from labor for German authorities or for contractors executing contracts for German authorities, shall be punished by imprisonment.

ARTICLE 3

The military authorities have the exclusive right of jurisdiction under this decree.

ARTICLE 4

This decree takes effect immediately upon promulgation.

The Governor-General in Belgium

FREIHERR VON DER GOLTZ
Field-Marshal General

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 406

Letter, CROSBY TO HOOVER, *on the progress of conferences in Brussels brought about through the German attempt to control the relief organization especially by regulating "secours" to the unemployed.*

BRUSSELS, 8 July 1915

Herbert C. Hoover, London

MY DEAR HOOVER:

The situation in regard to any new relations between the German authorities and the C.N. and C.R.B. has changed rather suddenly since last night. I sent you telegrams indicating that Francqui expected to make no accord whatever if any substantial changes were proposed by German authority, but to take this position—that it will be necessary to refer such changes to the governments concerned, and that to this effect he would ask permission to leave the country for a visit to England and perhaps Havre.

No conference between the German authorities and the ministers took place until yesterday. At that meeting a number of the points presented by General von Bissing's first note[5] were somewhat softened in their application. The capital matter of secours, and that as connected with possible requirements by the Germans, that Belgians should work for them, was agreed to be left as determined by the Hague Conference of 1907.

Mr. Francqui was present, and the Ministers, with Mr. Francqui consenting, seem to have accepted the proposition of the Germans to this effect. When I was told of this by Mr. Francqui last night, I naturally raised the point that no two persons of opposite interest

[5] Chapter ii, Document 36.

had yet agreed upon the interpretation of any paragraph of the Hague conference, and that it seemed to me merely a delay of possible trouble, to leave the matter without asking the Germans for their interpretation of the principal paragraph in question, namely Paragraph 52, Section I, of the annex to the Convention. Mr. Francqui seemed, at last, to feel this was desirable; and I understand that today the presidents of the Provincial Committee have taken the same ground. I have just learned, however, (3:00 P.M. Thursday) from Mr. Whitlock, that he and Marquis de Villalobar had yesterday considered the matter as settled.

Your telegram indicating that you were sending the new British regulations on the subject was received yesterday morning and communicated to Mr. Francqui, but he did not get it early enough to submit it before the meeting. Mr. Whitlock was therefore much surprised when I went over the subject with him this afternoon. He seems to feel, however, that he can follow my suggestion of holding the matter open by asking for an interpretation of the paragraph in question. I had no information until last night after the meeting above mentioned, that Mr. Francqui had any other idea than that of asking for the permission to go out for discussion in England and Havre.

Upon receipt of the expected letter from you, giving terms[6] desired by the British government, it is probable the matter can then be definitely arranged.

I suppose if the British requirements are accepted by the German authorities, that Mr. Francqui's visit may then be unnecessary. It is not clear that the Ministers consider it important.

Sincerely and hastily yours

(Signed) OSCAR T. CROSBY
Brussels Office

DOCUMENT NO. 407

Extract of letter,[7] VILLALOBAR TO VON DER LANCKEN, *stating the principle verbally agreed upon, that the German authorities would not employ the C.N. or the C.R.B. as a means to force Belgian workers into employment beneficial to the German Army.*

BRUSSELS, 16 July 1915

To His Excellency Baron von der Lancken

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

. . . . . .

The British Government has promised to allow and facilitate the import . . . . under the conditions, the principles of which we have already had the pleasure of agreeing upon with Your Excellency.

[6] Chapter ii, Document 38.

[7] The full text of this letter is given as Document 344, chapter viii. Villalobar and Whitlock sent identical letters.

. . . . . .

That the Belgian population alone will receive the advantage of the secours which the Comité National will distribute.

That the Comité National and the C.R.B. will continue to enjoy full liberty of action in accordance with their mission and their responsibilities in provisioning and giving assistance to the Belgian population who are in need.

That the German authorities will at no time employ the Comité National or the C.R.B. as a means to force the population of working people, against their will and against their conscience, to employment either directly or indirectly benefiting the German Imperial Army.

. . . . . .

I have no doubt that Your Excellency will be good enough to signify your agreement with the above.

. . . . . .

(Signed) VILLALOBAR
Minister of Spain in Belgium

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 408

Extract of letter,[8] VON DER LANCKEN TO VILLALOBAR, *giving assurance that the C.N. would not be used to force Belgians to work for the German Army*

BRUSSELS, 29 July 1915

To His Excellency, the Marquis de Villalobar, Brussels

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I have the honor to acknowledge your letter of the 16th of July with regard to the provisioning of Belgium . . . .

I am happy to be able to inform Your Excellency that M. the Governor General has agreed to the following principles, which I am sure are the same as those stated by Your Excellency, viz.:

. . . . . .

That the Governor General will at no time make use of the Comité National to force the Belgian working population to employment for the benefit of the German army, contrary to the stipulations of the Hague Conventions.

. . . . . .

(Signed) VON DER LANCKEN

[*Translation*]

[8] The full text of this letter is given as Document 345, chapter viii.

DOCUMENT NO. 409

German decree concerning measures to ensure the continuance of necessary labor in the interest of the public[9]

BRUSSELS, 14 August 1915

ARTICLE 1

Anyone who without adequate reason refuses to undertake or continue labor in the interest of the public, for which he is called upon by German authorities and which is in the line of his professional activity, shall be punished by detention or imprisonment for not more than one year.

In particular, any reason for such refusal based on international law is to be accepted as adequate.

ARTICLE 2

Article 2 of the Decree of 19th November 1914 (*Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für die okkupierten Gebiete Belgiens,* No. 17, p. 57) is replaced by the following regulation:

Whoever undertakes, by force, threats, persuasion, or other means to restrain others from undertaking or continuing labor in the interest of the public, for which he is called upon by German authorities and which is in the line of his professional activity, or labor for German authorities or for contractors executing contracts for German authorities, shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than five years.

ARTICLE 3

Anyone who knowingly aids or abets a refusal to work which incurs punishment in accordance with Article 1, by furnishing support [Unterstützungen] or in any other manner, shall be punished by a fine of not more than ten thousand marks, in addition to which a sentence of imprisonment for not more than one year may be imposed.

ARTICLE 4

If communes, unions [Vereinigungen], or other organizations aid or abet refusal to work as described in Article 3, the penalty shall be imposed on the leaders.

ARTICLE 5

Sums of money which are proved to be destined for the support of the persons designated in Article 1 shall be confiscated for the benefit of the Belgian Red Cross.

ARTICLE 6

The German military courts and the German military authorities have jurisdiction in these cases.

[9] From *Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für die okkupierten Gebiete Belgiens,* No. 108, 22d August 1915, p. 887.

ARTICLE 7

Independently of the foregoing regulations, the competent authorities may when the circumstances so justify levy coercive impositions [Zwangsauflagen].

ARTICLE 8

This decree takes effect immediately upon its promulgation.

FREIHERR VON BISSING, *Generaloberst*
The Governor-General in Belgium

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 410

Letter, MASTERS OF THE LESSINES QUARRIES TO VON BISSING, *concerning conditions of the resumption of work in the quarries and the arrest of masters and men by the authorities*

LESSINES, 25 October 1915

His Excellency Freiherr von Bissing
Governor-General of Belgium

EXCELLENCY:

We learn that you have directed an inquiry into the facts as a result of which a certain number of directors and assistants as well as numerous quarrymen of Lessines were recently condemned to prison by a War Court for refusing to work.

We ask you to authorize us to demonstrate that the position taken by them is not only sanctioned by the rules of International Law but also by Article 1 of your Decree of 14th August 1915.

For more than a year all operations have been suspended in the Lessines quarries and great misery prevails among the working population of that city and the adjacent villages. Further, masters and workmen would embrace with joy the opportunity to resume work which would not be opposed to their patriotic duty.

This was our attitude at the first. We so declared it on 21st August to Mr. Martini, Berg-Assessor at Mons. We told him that if sufficient guarantee could be given that the product of the quarries would not be employed either directly or indirectly for military purposes, we were convinced that all difficulties would be easily settled. Unfortunately, the guarantees we asked were refused us without discussion, which could only be interpreted by us as a confirmation of our fears that it was desired to force us to aid the operations of the German Army against the Belgian Army and the Allies. Furthermore, we have received proof that the macadam of Lessines is shipped toward the German lines.

Under these conditions our refusal to work is legitimate, as we stated above, through Article 52 of regulations concerning laws and customs of war, and through Article 1 of your Decree of 14th August 1915.

Also, may we count upon the equity of Your Excellency, to have justice done to our fellow-citizens, recently sentenced.

We think it advisable to demonstrate once more the legality of our position, to confirm to you that we are disposed now, as at the first, to do all in our power to induce the workmen to resume work if this resumption may be undertaken under conditions compatible with our patriotic duty. A simple method would permit us to give satisfaction to the German authorities.

We are ready to endeavor to induce the workmen to resume work if formal assurance is given us that no product of the Lessines quarries will be acquired or requisitioned for any military purpose whatever.

We understand quite well that it might not be possible to authorize us to ourselves verify the execution of this engagement, but would it not be easy to grant to an authority or a citizen of a neutral country the right to control the destination of the product of the Lessines quarries?

If that were done we should be enabled to show our workmen that they might resume work without committing an act of treason toward their country, and we are sure that they would receive with joy the possibility of increasing the comfort of their families, now subjected by a spirit of sacrifice, to the greatest privations.

In closing, we venture to draw the attention of Your Excellency to the treatment inflicted upon the recently sentenced directors of Lessines.

They are under a régime of hard labor, which is particularly serious on account of the age and state of health of several of them.

We are sure that such action could only have been taken without the knowledge of the higher authorities of the German Government. Also, we dare to hope that Your Excellency will see fit, without awaiting the result of the enquiry which you have ordered, to intervene in order that the treatment to which our friends are subjected, may be mitigated.

We beg Your Excellency to accept the assurance of our high consideration.

Signed by

The Masters of the Lessines Quarries, except Jacquemin, Vandevelde, and new quarry owner

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 411

Letter, VON BISSING, *replying to the preceding and stating the German position*

BRUSSELS, 5 November 1915

The memorandum of 25th October 1915 concerning the refusal to work at Lessines has not altered my opinion on the subject.

The opposition of the operators and the workmen to my efforts

to settle the question of work and to effect the well-being of the population is not justified by the Convention of The Hague.

The operators should recognize my efforts to induce the workmen to earn a regular salary (see my Decree August 16) and had better demand the protection of the military power to force the recalcitrant men to work.

You may not refer the matter to the Convention of The Hague, for even if the macadam was not used exclusively for the needs of the occupied country, as for instance for the repair of important military roads, or, as an exception, once for the need of the army, this is no reason for refusing to produce it.

For as these products do not serve primarily for military undertakings of war, the workmen do not take part in operations of war against their country.

Therefore, I have no guarantee to give that the product of the Lessines Quarries shall not have a military application and I must reject this requirement, which is that the authorities should be subject to control as concerns the use of this macadam.

The application of my Decree of 18th August 1915 to the refusal to work at Lessines has received my approval, and the penalties imposed are just because they are not counter to Article 52 of the Hague Convention and the culprits were warned of the penalties they incurred in refusing to work.

The extent of the penalty is also justified by reason of the stubborn opposition of the offenders.

Finally, as regards the article relating to hard labor and to the régime to which the prisoners are subjected, this assertion is inexact, for I have been advised that, on the contrary, privileges were granted them at the prison at Mons, in the matter of cleaning the cells, baths, and the transport of baggage on their departure.

BARON VON BISSING
Governor-General

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 412

Letter, GREY TO PAGE, *indicating that the German methods of coercing Belgian workers are likely to cause the British to withdraw their support of relief*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
22 September 1915

The United States Ambassador, London

MY DEAR AMBASSADOR:

You will recollect that Lord Crewe's letter of July 7th,[10] laying down the conditions governing the work of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, contained the following remark:

[10] Document 341, chapter viii.

"If the German authorities desire to use the machinery of the Commission and the Comité National for the purpose of coercing the working population of Belgium to employ themselves against their own will and conscience, directly or indirectly in the service, or for the benefit, of the occupying Army, they must themselves provide the relief which these bodies dispense, and all arrangements between His Majesty's Government and the Commission must cease."

In my subsequent letter[11] of July 17th, I stipulated that "there shall be no interference of any kind whatever by the German authorities either in the sale of these foodstuffs or in their free distribution in the way of relief to those whom the Commission and the Comité National shall consider deserving of such relief."

In reply to this, Baron von der Lancken stated in his letter[12] to Mr. Whitlock of July 29th that "Monsieur le Gouverneur Général ne se servira jamais du Comité National pour forcer la population belge à s'employer au service de l'armée allemande, contrairement aux stipulations des Conventions de la Haye."

On August 14th and 15th the Governor General of Belgium issued two decrees which were published in the *Gesetz und Verordnungsblatt* at Brussels on August 22nd. These decrees impose severe punishments on workmen who refuse to give their labour to "works of public interest" or who, being in receipt of either public or private relief, refuse to accept work offered to them. Similar penalties are imposed on persons, "communes, associations, or other groups" who, "by the distribution of relief or by other means," "favour" such refusal to work. The decree of August 14th is to be enforced by the military tribunals. The decree of August 15th imposes automatically imprisonment for a fortnight to six months on all who, having refused work, become a charge on either public or private relief.

Both these decrees contain a clause exempting from their operation those cases where refusal to work is based on considerations admitted by international law, and I am well aware that the German authorities will claim that this exemption is a sufficient fulfilment of their promise quoted above. They will also doubtless claim that the word "favour" implies a deliberate use of relief for certain objects and does not apply to the assistance given by the relief committees of the Comité National. Unfortunately, the German authorities cannot expect, in view of their known actions in such matters, that any reliance should be placed on the interpretation to be given to such vague phrases by their military tribunals. The report recently published by the Belgian Commission of Inquiry (9th Report, August 6th) on the methods of coercion applied by the German authorities to the railway workmen at Luttre has revealed the German policy in such matters, and it is alleged on good evidence that, in order to give effect to that policy, the relief committees, communal soup-kitchens, etc., have in many cases been forbidden to give relief to classes of workmen whose labour the German authorities desire to enlist in their service. It is, however, unnecessary to rely on such allegations,

[11] Document 38, chapter ii.

[12] Document 408.

since, by the decree of August 15th itself, the mere grant of relief to a workman renders that workman liable to imprisonment on the ground that he has in the past refused employment.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate the account given in the report above-mentioned, or to dwell on the measures of deliberate starvation, imprisonment, deportation, and torture to which these workmen have been subjected. This, it must be assumed, is the "law of nations" which is referred to in these German decrees and to which the relief committees are to be subjected, and this is the interpretation to be placed on the "Hague Conventions" and on the phrase "the service of the German Army" in Baron von der Lancken's letter. If any Belgian workman, knowing the wide extent of the needs of the German army and the manner in which every industry in Germany is already devoted to the task of supplying it, should refuse to work in industries indirectly essential to the maintenance of that army, relief is to be denied to him and starvation and imprisonment await him.

I feel that, were this correspondence to be published—and it will, I fear, soon be my duty to ask Your Excellency's consent to its publication if present conditions continue—the people of this country would draw from it the conclusion that no further assistance should be given on their behalf by His Majesty's Government to a relief organisation whose activities are in danger of being so controlled by the enemy.

In face of the grave alternatives before which the whole work of relief is thus placed, I feel obliged to ask you to be good enough to draw the attention of the patrons of the Comité National at Brussels once more to the facts I have stated, in order that they may take the necessary steps to satisfy themselves both now and as time goes on, that the German authorities abstain from all interference in the work of relief which those authorities themselves have so recently promised to leave free and untrammelled. I sincerely regret to be obliged to trouble Your Excellency further in this matter in view of the efforts already made by Mr. Whitlock to put the whole organisation on a sound basis, but you will, I hope, understand the necessity for a clear understanding on such important matters.

In conclusion I must again call attention to what I said in my letter of July 17, that this work could not be based on the strict belligerent rights of either Government. Your Excellency knows that the Commission is enabled to exist solely by the assistance given to it by His Majesty's Government, and His Majesty's Government having so far gone beyond their duties and renounced their rights, they cannot tolerate that they should be met in this matter by an assertion of rights on the part of those who have renounced their duties.

I have sent an identic letter to the Spanish Ambassador, and have furnished the Netherlands Minister with a copy at his request.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) E. GREY

During the winter of 1915–16 the Germans increased their pressure on Belgian workers, particularly on employees of the railways and railway shops. The method was first to forbid the Société Coopérative to continue its advances to the worker; then to offer the worker a job, to arrest and try him before a German court if he refused the job, and to give him a prison sentence or deport him to Germany if he persisted in his refusal. The idea of deporting Belgians for work in German factories appears to have been first broached at an economic congress of German industrialists and functionaries held at Brussels in June 1915. The plan was not put into effect on a large scale until a year later.[13]

DOCUMENT NO. 413

Letter, C. M. Torrey, C.R.B. Delegate to Namur, to C.R.B., Brussels, *describing efforts of German authorities to compel Belgians to work in railway shops*

Namur, 29 March 1916

The Commission for Relief in Belgium,
Executive Department,
Brussels

Gentlemen:

Regarding the question of attempts by the military occupants to force Belgian workmen to do repair and construction of a military or semi-military nature on the railroads, I have been made acquainted with the details of one case and the general features of two others in this province.

The case to which I should first refer is that at Rochefort in this province. Upon the occasion of a visit there yesterday, I was informed by three of the persons concerned of the facts in the matter.

It appears that the three with whom I spoke—Josef Francau, Eugene Paquet, and Emil Delhaize— had, up to the 7th of February 1916 and for four months past enjoyed a chomeur's remittance from the local committees of Secours, of 1.50 francs a day and for two days each week. On the 7th of February 1916 a summons to these three and to eleven other able-bodied men of Rochefort (most of whom were in the like position of chomeur) came from the office of the German Kommandantur, commanding the men to present themselves at Jemelle, a village two kilometers away, where railroad repair and construction shops are situated. Following this demand, the fourteen presented themselves the same day at Jemelle, at these shops as requested. When all had gathered there at 8:00 a.m., a

[13] See Pirenne and Vauthier, *La législation et l'administration allemandes en Belgique,* chapter v.

German officer evidently in charge of the shop asked them to work, describing the labor generally as that of repair, and offering as payment 3 marks 60 pfennigs a day. Further, it seems that certain specific positions, among them locomotive engineer, chief workman, and inspector of material, were offered to individuals who were interrogated and considered by the military to have the necessary qualifications. In any event, the men at that time and later seemed to agree substantially that the work demanded was either directly military (as making over cars for the carriage of soldiers and specific munitions) or indirectly so as being connected in general with the main purpose of the Germans' use of Belgian railroads.

This request to sign a contract to work and the offer of payment was made in the morning shortly after eight, and was immediately refused by each of the fourteen. Upon such refusal, they were detained at Jemelle until 10:00 P.M., at which hour they were conducted to the Kommandantur's office at Rochefort. There they were individually interrogated, stripped, and searched; and upon another refusal given at the end of this process, at 2:00 A.M. February 8th, they were taken off to Dinant, which they reached at 6:00 A.M., thence to Namur, which they reached (under military conduct) about 10:00 A.M. In Namur they were first put into prison without examination or interrogatory, and kept there thenceforward on a diet (they tell me) of bread and water. Finally on February 25 their formal examination and trial was held, at which they were condemned to a month's imprisonment dating from February 8th. On March 10 they were liberated.

Meanwhile, according to our Secours Central Bureau in Namur, the military commanded that the payment of chomage to such of these men as were chomeurs (like Francau, Paquet, Delhaize) cease. This order was complied with.

The names of the fourteen men in this case are as follows (all of Rochefort):

Josef Francau	Eugene Paquet
Emil Delhaize	Arthur Biebuca
Alfred Delhaize	Auguste Dumonte
Nestor Dumont	Fernand Baiot
Eugene Auspere	Leopold Barnich
Joseph Bodart	Emil Charrier
Theophile Bacquet	Jules Delimois

The first three men (with whom I talked) are now working in private employ. None of the others has accepted the contract to work for the military, and they are engaged in various occupations—some again enjoying chomage. It is to be inferred that the Germans raised no objection to paying chomage to these men after their month of prison.

A second case, which resulted otherwise, took place about the same time at Jemelle. Nineteen men of that place, after offer made, signed the contract. But after such signature, they regretted their action and refused to work—whereupon they were, in the same

manner, put into prison. The men at Rochefort said yesterday that after six weeks of prison they accepted the contract again, and are now working at Jemelle. The delicacy of entering the German railroad shop at Jemelle and talking to their employees deterred me from making yesterday a more exhaustive investigation, but I expect to have the full facts from a reliable source on Friday, the 31st, and shall immediately advise you.

The third case took place at Namur itself. Twenty-three workmen, most of whom were railroad employees before the war, were approached by the military on or about the 1st of March and asked to work at repairing locomotives and rail-wagons. They refused. Up to the time of the request and refusal, most of these men had received through the medium of the Société Coopérative d'Avances et de Prêts, rue Montagne de l'Oratoire No. 14, at Brussels, a monthly remittance of 37½ per cent of their salary before the war, with a minimum of 60 francs. But upon such refusal, the German authorities signified to the Société Coopérative their prohibition to remit any money. The case has been assigned meanwhile for military trial, the sitting to be held Thursday, March 30, 1916.

Further, the Namur agents of police, acting under orders of the military authorities, are now making visits to the houses of former railroad workmen, demanding of them to take up such work again, and noting any reasons given for refusal.

I enclose herewith copy of German affiches on the subject (of which 1st Copie A, page 1, Article 2, and Copie B, Article 1, will be of interest), and correspondence giving German consent to the Secours by medium of the Société Coopérative.

Very truly yours

(Signed) C. M. Torrey

P.S. I also enclose papers received later from our Provincial Secours office, as follows:

1. Order of military prohibiting payment of secours to Warlin.
2. Lists of men prohibited from receiving secours.
3. German letter to Société Coopérative.
4. Second list of secours prohibitions.

I have just had a statement from one of our C.P. staff (*a*) that only Belgian locomotives are repaired in Belgian shops so far as he has seen, and (*b*) that Belgian locomotives are used only for transporting materials, not troops.

2. *The Deportation of Belgians, October 1916–September 1918*

During the summer of 1916 a steadily increasing number of Belgians were forced to accept German employment in Belgium or in Germany. At first there was no technical violation of relief guarantees, but Hoover and the C.R.B. offi-

cials in Belgium exerted themselves in every direction to convince the German authorities in Belgium of the disastrous effects of this policy not only on neutral opinion, but on the conduct of relief. Civil officials and even the Governor-General recognized the soundness of these arguments, and disapproved the policy, but affairs in Germany had reached the stage where the opinions of civil officials carried but little weight. Recognition, at the Great Headquarters (to which von Hindenburg and Ludendorff came at the end of August) of the inferiority in man power of the Central Powers led to drastic action. Early in September the Supreme Army Command demanded the complete mobilization of German man power. Strong opposition immediately gathered against this proposal. Why, it was asked, should such drastic measures be used in Germany until the manpower resources of the conquered territories had been utilized? Great Headquarters had not overlooked the man power of Belgium and Poland and it was determined to make use of it. Belgian deportations, it was clear, would serve the double purpose of releasing more Germans for military service and of meeting one form of political opposition to an extension of German conscription.[14] At any rate the Supreme Command "requested" the Governor-General in Brussels to make up the shortage of labor in German industries by more extensive deportations from Belgium. The Governor-General acquiesced and wholesale deportations followed. To Cardinal Mercier's moving protest, von Bissing replied that the deportations were an attempt to save Belgian workers from demoralization by unemployment which was caused by the British blockade. The outcry which followed in neutral and Allied countries and even in Germany was to Ludendorff merely an exhibition of a "very childish judgment on the war."[15]

The German determination to push on with the deporta-

[14] After long debate the Reichstag finally passed the Auxiliary Service Act (2d December 1916) but in a form which failed entirely to meet the stiff demands of the army. See *Ludendorff's Own Story,* II p. 393. Also *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,* November 19, 22, 23, 24, and especially 24, for the bearing of the law on the occupied territories.

[15] Ludendorff, *op. cit.,* p. 397. The Minority Socialist deputies Haase and Dittmann protested in the Reichstag, 2d December 1916, against the deportations which were defended by Helfferich. See *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,* 3d December 1916. Cardinal Mercier's eloquent letters and von Bissing's replies are given in Whitlock's *Belgium,* II, pp. 495–528.

tions on a large scale and regardless of consequences left the C.R.B. with two alternatives: to make an issue of the deportations with the certain result that all its activities would be terminated and the great mass of the Belgian people be left without the aid of foreign relief upon which they depened; or accept the situation as inescapable and to exert itself to mitigate the suffering which the deportations entailed and to continue to aid those Belgians left in their homes. Hoover chose the second alternative and the Allied Governments, recognizing the compelling reasons for this decision, did not carry out the threat implied in the correspondence of the British Foreign Office to cut off their support of relief activities. The American Government protested at Berlin, while in Belgium the C.R.B. endeavored to bring pressure on the German Government indirectly and to hold the German authorities to the terms of their guarantees.[16]

DOCUMENT NO. 414

Letter,[17] GREY TO SECRETARY AMERICAN EMBASSY AT LONDON, *asking for a statement whether German authorities are observing their guarantees in respect to liberty and conscience of Belgian workmen*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
4 October 1916

DEAR MR. LAUGHLIN:

1. You will recollect the communications which I felt obliged to address to you on various occasions regarding the question of forced labour in Belgium.

2. As you have been kind enough to assume, together with the United States and Spanish Ministers at Brussels, the function of supervising for the guidance of the governments concerned, the carrying out of the guarantees under which the Commission for Relief in Belgium works, I shall be glad if you could inform me whether, in the opinion of the Patrons of the Commission and of the Comité National, the guarantees given by the Germans to respect the liberty and conscience of Belgian workmen are being duly carried out.

(Signed) GREY OF FALLODON

[16] Governor-General von Bissing's explanation of the deportations policy is given in an interview, published in the *New York Times,* 12th November 1916, and the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,* 14th November 1916. See also F. Passelecq, *Les déportations belges à la lumière des documents allemandes* and *Cmd.* 8404 Misc. 37 (1916), *Correspondence with the Belgian Minister respecting the Deportation of Belgians, etc.,* and Whitlock, *op. cit.,* II, chapters xxxviii–xlii, xlv, xlix.

[17] Identic letter sent to Senor Don Alfonso Merry del Val, Spanish Ambassador at London.

DOCUMENT NO. 415

Letter,[18] PERCY TO HOOVER, *setting forth policy to be followed by the C.R.B. in respect to forced labor and deportations*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
20 October 1916

DEAR MR. HOOVER:

I want to draw your attention to Lord Robert Cecil's recent answer in the House of Commons[19] to a question as to the distribution of foodstuffs in Belgium in connexion with the German labour policy. Lord Robert laid down in that answer that the Commission worked on the following principles:

1. The Commission supplies nothing to any German civilian.
2. The Commission supplies nothing, except bread, to any Belgian who earns enough to feed himself from native supplies.
3. Any workman working for the Germans under coercion must be maintained by the Germans entirely, without any assistance whatever from the Commission.

You should take this as a direction to the Commission on which they should model their action.

As you know, the Press at the present moment is full of the accounts of the coercion of Belgian workmen and their deportation to the place where the Germans wish them to work. There are two points in connexion with this that you should bear in mind.

First, if deportations take place, it does not matter whether they take place to Germany or to other parts of the occupied territory, since under the third rule set out above you will have no further responsibility for them. If, therefore, deportations take place on any large scale under any general decree of the Governor-General, it will become necessary to consider whether your importations should be proportionately reduced, and as it will be impossible for us here to judge accurately the extent to which any such decrees are being enforced at any given moment, or will be enforced by the time that any one of your shipments reach the ultimate consumer in Belgium, it will become necessary for us, in order to meet the pressure of public opinion here, to make a rough general reduction in your ration probably out of all proportion to the actual number of workmen coerced.

Secondly, to judge from the Press reports—and indeed from the necessities of the situation—all coercion of labor in Belgium is bound to be based upon the criterion that men who fall under your relief owing to unemployment are liable to be coerced. Now, all relief, whether in kind or in cash, given in Belgium arises from your importations and is made on your responsibility. Therefore, this criterion amounts to a statement that a workman renders himself liable to enslavement by the mere fact of accepting relief from you. This is

[18] A similar letter was sent by Sir Eyre A. Crowe (for Viscount Grey) to Ambassador Page for transmission to Whitlock and Villalobar in Brussels.

[19] *Parliamentary Debates,* Vol. lxxxvi, p. 706.

clearly equivalent to the use of your relief as a means of coercing workmen against their conscience, and therefore constitutes a clear and deliberate violation of the German guarantees.

You should be guided by these considerations in dealing with this very serious and dangerous question.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) EUSTACE PERCY

DOCUMENT NO. 416

Memorandum, by KELLOGG, *regarding forced labor in Belgium*

BRUSSELS, 20 October 1916

Among the undertakings given by His Excellency the Governor General to the Protecting Ministers is one which provides that the German authorities will not make use of the institutions of the relief work for the purpose of compelling the Belgian population to work for the service of the German Army. Until recently this undertaking has been rigorously lived up to, both as to the wording of the undertaking, and, which is no less important, as to its intention. Recent happenings, however, give grave cause to fear that measures are under way of execution which are in open contradiction to the intention and even to the wording of the undertaking. It is common knowledge that demands are being made upon unemployed, and even employed men, to work for the German army. The most conspicuous examples of these measures now under way of enforcement are in the Belgian Etappen, but there are in addition specific cases in the territory of the General Government, for example, in the province of Luxembourg and in the region of Tournai in the province of Hainaut. It is, of course, true that the region of Tournai has been, for purpose of military control, recently transferred from the territory of the General Government to that of the French Etappen, but for the purpose of ravitaillement this region is still attached to the General Government and is still provisioned under the general regulations and guarantees established for the territory of the General Government.

In the Luxembourg, orders have been issued which prevent the civil population from continuing to labor at certain public works established by the civil authorities of the province and the representatives of the Provincial Committee (which itself is but a suborganization of the Comité National). Further orders prevent the men thus thrown out of employment from being employed by private persons. These men are then invited by the German military authorities to work for them. This is a condition which, if not directly, at least indirectly, produces an infraction of the intention of the undertaking with regard to the forcing of labor. Indeed, in connection with the situation in the Luxembourg there have been numerous incidents which contravene the wording of the undertaking.

In Tournai the situation is even more serious. Direct demands have been made upon large numbers of men to take up work for the

military authorities. On the refusal of these demands the men have been interned in camps, practically as prisoners, and put upon a ration of bread and water. The ration of bread has been fixed by the military authorities at 750 grams per person per day, and it has been ordered that the relief organizations furnish this bread but may not furnish any other part of the regular ration (bacon, lard, rice, peas and beans, etc.). If the Comité National and the Commission for Relief in Belgium should accept this situation without protest, they would be permitting an indirect infraction of the undertaking between the General Governor and the Protecting Ministers, and would even be a party to the punishment, by a limitation of the food rations, of these Belgian men.

There have been numerous instances in various parts of Belgium of demands made by the military authorities on the local committees of the relief organizations for lists of chomeurs, with the expressed intention of using these lists as a means of determining what men should be impressed for labor in the service of the German Army. There have even been arrests and deportations to Germany of the local civil authorities for refusing to give these lists.

All together, the incidents and conditions which are apparent today in various parts of Belgium seem to indicate a definite purpose on the part of the military authorities to force parts of the civil population to work in the service of the German Army in contravention of the undertakings given by the Governor-General to the Protecting Ministers. The situation is one, therefore, that calls for immediate consideration and strong protest.

V. L. KELLOGG

DOCUMENT NO. 417

Letter, HOOVER TO WHITLOCK, *suggesting a vigorous protest against German policy of deportations*

BRUSSELS, 8 November 1916

MY DEAR MR. WHITLOCK:

Reports this morning from all over the country show seizure of men right and left regardless of employment, including members of our local committees and employees. I fear it is the beginning of the end.

It is worth your considering uttering a full and strong protest with all the vigor of which you are so capable.

This is a greater issue to the Belgian people than anything since the invasion and they look to you as to America for some strong action.

It may result in nothing, but it will have put the American stamp on it in indelible terms, and if we do nothing else for Belgium we will go down in a blaze of indignation at this, its worst of any trials since the first agony.

Sincerely

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 418

Letter, HOOVER TO DR. BRUHN OF THE DEUTSCHE VERMITTLUNGSSTELLE, C.N., *regarding position of the C.R.B. in respect to forced labor and deportations*

BRUSSELS, 11 November 1916

Dr. Bruhn
Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle, C.N., Brussels

DEAR DR. BRUHN:

Dr. Rieth called this morning regarding any suggestions I might be able to offer with regard to regulations to be put in force to ameliorate the conditions surrounding the forced labor from Belgium.

The matter is now in discussion between the American Legation in Brussels and the American Embassy in Berlin and, in consequence, it would be entirely wrong of me to intervene in any way.

The whole question is one which I feel very deeply and one out of which I can see no good end.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman

DOCUMENT NO. 419

Press statement[20] *concerning Department of State instructions to Chargé d'Affaires, Berlin, relative to the effect of deportations on neutral opinion, especially in the United States*

WASHINGTON, 15 November 1916

In consequence of the deportations from Belgium, the State Department has directed Mr. Grew, its chargé d'affaires in Berlin, to discuss the matter personally with the Imperial Chancellor.

Mr. Grew is requested to inform Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg that such deportations cannot but have a most unfortunate effect on neutral opinion, particularly in the United States, which has the welfare of the Belgian civilian population very much at heart.

These instructions are the outcome of a long report from Mr. Grew stating that he had discussed the situation informally and unofficially with Herr Zimmermann, who admitted that the definite policy had been adopted of enforcing the labour of Belgians in cases where they refused to work voluntarily, on the ground that so many had refused to work that the strain on public charity had become intolerable.

[20] From the *Pall Mall Gazette,* 15th November 1916. A group of State Department documents beginning with the 10th October 1916 on deportation of civilians from Belgium are given in U.S. Dept. of State, *European War No. 4,* pp. 357–373. They include despatches from Chargé Grew at Berlin, Minister Whitlock at Brussels, and an interesting memorial from the German Government on the subject, for publication in Allied and neutral countries.

The deportations are viewed here not only as a violation of international law, but in a certain degree as a violation of Germany's assurances made to Mr. Gerard in June, which, though relating to the deportation of French women from Lille, Roubaix, and Turcoing,[21] are felt to be applicable to the present case.

The theory by which the Germans justified the forced labor and deportation policy was that unemployment was demoralizing the Belgian workers and hence that work even for Germany was after all for the good of the Belgians. According to this theory only the *chômeurs* would be deported, but once the deportations were under way, the Germans ignored the distinction between employed and unemployed, and began to deport persons employed by the relief organizations. These raids on the personnel of the Commission and C.N. constituted a violation of the German guarantees, since it dangerously interfered with the maintenance of the relief organization. The Commission protested vigorously to the German authorities, but to no avail. The threats of the British to stop relief and the protests of the United States Government at Berlin were equally without effect.

DOCUMENT NO. 420

Memorandum, by Warren Gregory, *regarding forced labor, with reports of the C.R.B. delegates of deportations at Antwerp, Court–St. Etienne, and Wavre*

Brussels, 20 November 1916

The taking of chomeurs continues and will probably commence in the city of Brussels this week. Thus far our cards have been respected with one exception below noted. Indeed, in Antwerp, one of our representatives succeeded in getting on the train and taking back two men who had already been passed, to the great admiration and gratitude of the Belgian people. The exception noted is at Mons, where, on the 17th inst., nine of our men were taken. I am attaching copy of a letter written to the Vermittlungsstelle, which will describe the circumstances. I have also informed the Ministers, at their meeting on Friday last, of this transaction. I do not consider this single evasion of their promise as vital, provided it does not act as a precedent. I am, however, greatly concerned regarding the statement of Dr. Bruhn, which is the subject matter of the concluding paragraph of the letter. If this decision is adhered to, it will seriously cripple our working force, and I shall endeavor as vigorously as possible to obtain a rescission of this conclusion on the part of the authorities.

[21] Documents 433 to 435 describe this incident.

Attached also are reports from Messrs. Jackson, Richardson, and Brackett on this subject.

I think our men have done some good work in this regard, but in future our plan is not to send them unless the arrangement is being violated, for the reason that their presence may irritate the military authorities.

15 November 1916

ANTWERP

The taking of chomeurs to Germany from the province of Antwerp has been going on this week. Four thousand men are called every day to present themselves at the railroad station, and of this number up to date, from the closest calculations we have been able to make, 5,856 have been sent to Germany. This is from the city of Antwerp alone and does not include the country districts.

When the men present themselves at the railroad stations the Germans make every effort to induce them to sign contracts to work. Among the inducements offered is pay at the rate of 6 marks a day. Those who do not sign but are forced to go nevertheless are told they will receive only 3 marks a day and have to work in camps. In addition, to the men that sign they advance 20 marks if single and 40 marks if married. They are then permitted to go home for two or three days before starting.

They are also promised that if they sign they can go to Longwy or Liège.

In general every pressure is brought upon the men to sign, but in most cases the Belgians have refused to do this. Those who present certificates that they are employed in general are released, but those who have no certificates are put on trains and sent to Germany.

One hundred and three men employed in the guano factory of Ohlendorf were all sent to Germany in a block, some of the workers being fifty years old.

We are sending a special report on this particular case to the Ministers.

The C.R.B. employment cards that we have issued have been uniformly respected and as yet we have no cases to report of C.R.B. employees having been taken to Germany.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) GARDNER RICHARDSON
C.R.B. Representative for Antwerp

15 November 1916

COURT–ST. ETIENNE

Yesterday, 14th November, I went to Court–St. Etienne to attend the taking of Belgian men by the Germans. I was obliged to leave, by order of the captain in charge, about half or three-quarters of an hour after the beginning, but about half an hour later came back and remained till the end, except for half an hour for dinner.

The men were brought in by a long path to a "filature" some distance from the town. The women and children therefore were not present. All men who stated themselves to be sick were examined by a doctor, and a certain number were thus released.

The others came on to the filature—to an open space between two buildings—where they presented themselves and their papers, such as cartes d'identité and cards from the Meldeamt, together with any certificates of one sort or another which they might possess. They were on the whole very decently treated by the Germans, but they were usually too frightened or confused or embarrassed to be very intelligent, as proved by the fact that often when told to go "à gauche" which was the way out and to liberty (though they perhaps didn't know it) they took the other path, which led to Germany. Many were turned back by soldiers, but as there was nothing on their cards to show in which direction they should go, I have no doubt that some were taken whom the Germans intended to liberate. Certain ones who were sent or went to the right—i.e., toward Germany—were afterward released, owing to special examinations, explanations, or to efforts of persons interested.

Various burgomasters and employers were present to urge special reasons for exemption, or to give assurance that certain men were actually and regularly employed. The Germans certainly really tried to take the young and unmarried men without employment, rather than others. They released many men who were employed in usines, and on farms, or who were small cultivateurs on their own account.

But toward the end of the list, when perhaps they were afraid they would not get as many men as required, they took a number of factory workers for whom their employer, Mr. Henricot, gave assurance that they were regularly employed. When he protested to the Commissaire Civil, the latter replied that this difficulty would not have occurred if the bourgomestre had given the lists of chomeurs. I believe certain workmen employed elsewhere were also taken.

Later, after the whole process was finished, I learned that two of the De Broux workmen, who had cards from the C.R.B., had been taken. I protested to the Commissaire Civil, explaining that the men worked exclusively for the Commission and had cards issued with the assent of his Government. He said we were lucky that so few were taken, that no one is irreplaceable, and that he had no instructions concerning our cards.

It appears that in the town, where the men collected before being marched to the filature, there was a bureau established presumably by the Kreischef, where the cards we had given were taken away and a stamp "Kreis Nivelles" put on the cartes d'identité of those who had had our cards. I am told that certain men, having obtained this stamp, went away without presenting themselves at the filature. The others came along with the crowd and, thanks to the stamp, were allowed to go free.

A few, however, whose attention had not been drawn to the bureau in the town, failed to obtain the "cachet" and arrived without it, but still provided with their cards given by us. The officers seem

to have been somewhat at a loss as to the proper procedure in such cases. My belief is—though I have no proof as I did not see them taken—that the two men taken by the Germans were of this class. (Cf. the Civil Commissaire's statement that he had no instructions concerning these cards.) Of these two men, one was later released, so that the final result was that only one of De Broux's laborers, out of about ninety-six who presented themselves, was taken. As far as I know, no member of a local committee who had received one of our cards was taken.

Conclusion: Orders had apparently been given to the Kreischef that our cards were to be respected, but they had not been communicated to the officers making the actual selection of men. These officers tried to choose primarily the men without work, and the young men without families to support. But they did not confine themselves strictly to these. In certain instances they took men concerning whom they had the positive assurance of their employers that they were working regularly. The decisions in these matters seemed more or less arbitrary, as certain laborers would be allowed to pass and others, for whom the employer made an equally positive statement that they were working regularly, were taken.

My impression is that the officers had orders to take so many—1,000, I believe—men, and that when they thought too many were being let off, and that there might be difficulty in completing the number, they felt obliged to take a larger proportion of those who presented themselves, workers or not.

(Signed) R. A. Jackson

Wavre

17 November 1916

As requested by Director Gregory, I was present at the requisition of men at Wavre on Wednesday, 15th November. Leaving Brussels very early in the morning, I arrived at Wavre before the gates of the city were closed to outsiders and before the requisition began; by means of the automobile pass and my personal card as delegate of the C.R.B. I was able to pass the various lines of guards and sentinels and reached the Place du Marché where the men were gathered.

Every approach to this square was crowded with men, women, and children, the men from neighboring communes waiting at different entrances the turn of their commune and held back in the meantime by lines of soldiers.

Arriving at the square, after some difficulty, I found Mr. Foreau, of the Brabant provincial committee and Regional President of Wavre, also Mr. Francq, one of the regional controllers.

From them, and by personal investigation, I learned that the cards which we have issued were actually in the hands of those who were entitled to them, i.e., those who had been duly listed by the regional president as engaged in the work of Secours and Alimentation either as members of the regional and local committee or in their employ.

These men were grouped together and they were later placed by the German officers with the town officials near the head of the column into which the men were formed.

The examination was conducted in two places; one on the "Place du Sablon" (Place du Marché), and the other at the Ecole Moyenne des Filles.

Besides the city of Wavre, the requisition included Limal, Limelette, Archennes, Bierges, La Hulpe, Chaine, Rixensart, Dion-le-Mont, Dion-le-Val, Genval, Lasne, and Nethen.

As Wavre was called first, I joined the C.R.B. group in the Wavre column and went with them to the Ecole des Filles, entering the examination room with them and remaining there for some time, together with Mr. Foreau, Mr. Francq, and an échevin of the city.

Being in this or the adjoining room, through which all men passed during the greater part of the forenoon, I was able to observe the examination of all the men from Wavre as well as some from neighboring districts. I gathered still more information later by mingling with the people and looking up members of our Committee in the various communal groups after they came out.

The method of conducting the requisition may be first described. First of all, the chomeurs and those who had signed a statement consenting to work were called for and taken; those from Wavre numbered perhaps 150.

Then the men of the communal government and those engaged in the work of Secours and Alimentation were passed in and released. After them, the rest entered without special order; those who claimed release on account of sickness were led to a room for medical examination by a physician and those who received this certificate were later released.

All the rest passed at once into a room where four or five German officers examined them, considering their certificates, and deciding whether they were to be taken or released.

From this room, they were sent to an adjoining room in two files, with the single phrase "à droite" or "à gauche." The former filed past an official who stamped their cartes d'identité with a cachet and dismissed them—free; the others were sent on to another room guarded by soldiers and presumably escorted to the train for deportation.

It was impossible for anyone else to approach the train and no one was allowed to see the men after this separation. A strong corps of soldiers were present at the Ecole, a good many officers were moving about, mounted cavalry lancers patrolled the place, and several hundred soldiers were on duty in the square and about the city.

The following observations may be noted:

1st: All men from 17 to 55 (inclusive) except ministers, physicians, lawyers, and teachers, were required to be present (a copy of the "avis" is appended).

As the population of Wavre and the region covered in this requisition is over 30,000 there must have been some 4,000 or 5,000 men.

2nd: All who had the C.R.B. certificates were free. There were one or two cases in which some employees, who were not listed by the regional or communal president and so did not receive a card, were taken. I was not present when this occurred and did not learn of it until the next day.

3rd: It is difficult to estimate the number taken, but I judge it to be between 700 and 800, the proportion being greater in the smaller communes than in Wavre. In Bierges for instance, more than two-fifths were taken, while in Wavre, it seemed to be about one in ten or twelve.

4th: The majority of those who were taken were young men but a good many were over 40 years of age and some over 50. The greater part were probably unmarried, but a considerable number were men of family, in certain instances men of large families dependent upon their labor.

5th: The requisition was not confined to men without work: the controller pointed out a number of men whom he knew personally and knew to be steadily employed; other instances were afterwards called to my attention. Railway employees especially were among the number taken.

6th: Beyond the general facts stated above, no definite or consistent basis of selection was apparent. On the whole, those presenting certificates showing that they had regular employment were freed, and they were mostly those of the better classes; but many striking exceptions occurred.

7th: The examinations were made rapidly and the decision "à gauche" or "à droite," quickly made, was final. No discussion was permitted save in a few instances, where an explanation was given by the burgomaster or échevin.

There was no disorder, and no attempts at resistance were made, the men being hurried through in single file like animals. Those who were to be deported were treated with distinctly less consideration than those who were freed, but without violence.

Relation to the C.R.B.: Considering the matter in its relation to the C.R.B., I have come to the following conclusions:

1st: That in the Brabant the certificates of the C.R.B. are recognized and those who held them are released as agreed by the German authorities.

2nd: That the presence of the C.R.B. delegate at the requisition, while perhaps desirable at first for the sake of direct information, is probably unwise in subsequent requisitions in the province. This judgment is based partly upon theory and partly upon experience. The delegate of the C.R.B. must be present either by permission or by suffrance and may be summarily dismissed if the authorities so desire. He has no final authority personally to enforce any objections he may wish to make. His presence is not desired, but is, in fact, distinctly resented. When he has asked for permission, it has been refused. When he has entered without securing permission in advance, he has been asked to withdraw. His position is thus undignified. Having secured the agreement of the occupying authorities to release those who are properly provided with cards, the more digni-

fied course for the C.R.B. is to assume that the agreements will be respected. This course is evidently more acceptable to the German officials, and the cards are even more likely to be honored than if a C.R.B. delegate is present. In case a man possessing our card is deported, the matter may be taken up in a more effective and dignified way with the final authorities. Information may be secured from the town officials, who are always present, or from our local committees, who know the men personally and are cognizant of all circumstances. These have been notified to inform us immediately of any infractions in cases of those who have cards.

3rd: This report is made from the point of view of a neutral observer in the interest of the C.R.B. and does not touch any other question concerning the requisition.

(Signed) F. P. Brackett

DOCUMENT NO. 421

Letter, Gregory to Dr. Bruhn, *protesting against deportations of employees of the C.R.B. and the C.N.*

Brussels, 20 November 1916

To the Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle C.N.
Brussels
Attention of Dr. Bruhn

Gentlemen:

I have the honor to recapitulate to you in writing the substance of our conversation of the 17th concerning the selection of men working for the ravitaillement service of this Commission.

A selection of men took place on the 16th at Mons, in the suburb of Nimy. Prior to that time the list of employees engaged in the ravitaillement service of this Commission and of the Comité National had been carefully examined and cut down to the minimum. Before the selection, Mr. Tuck and Mr. Gade, our representatives in the province of Hainaut called at the office of the Kreischef, as well as upon Captain Brande of the staff of the Kreischef, and left samples of the cards, and samples had also been forwarded to the office of Mr. Haniel, president of the civil administration. At the office of the Kreischef these gentlemen were instructed to present their men in a unit at the beginning of the proceedings. Accordingly the employees, numbering approximately 175, went to the designated place, accompanied by Messrs. Tuck and Gade, and also by Dr. Hilbert. Each man had his card in hand for easy inspection.

Of this total number 15 of our employees were originally taken, but some of them were later returned, so that the list of those who were finally taken is as follows:

On 16th November at Nimy

1. Brichaut, Victor, No. 40 Ruelle Rachot, Mons
2. Cantigneua, Maurice, 11 Cite Balasse, Mons

3. Cardinal, François, 40 Mont du Parc, Mons
4. Farix, François, 3 Rue du Petit, Quievroy, Mons
5. Fraix, Jean-Desire, Ghislain, Place Warocque, Mons

On 13th November at Havre

6. Vangrundenbergh, Gustave, Route d'Ath, Nimy

On 31st October at Jemappes

7. Dunortier, Oscar, Grant Place, Guesnes

On 16th November at Nimy

8. Maurice Ziger, Mons
9. Fernand Erquans, Mons

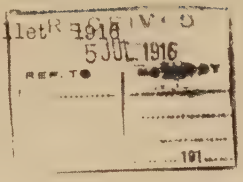
At the time these men were taken it was directly stated to the officer by our representative that the men were not chomeurs, but were actually employed in the ravitaillement service. Six of the men taken were dock-hands, who are now badly needed in Mons and the last two mentioned were members of the office force at Mons and badly needed. Care was taken to assure the officer that every man on the list was essential to the ravitaillement work, but in the course of procedure the major informed the inferior officers "that he could not permit the passing of so many men." Our representatives were uncertain whether the officer intended to say that he did not know of the cards, or whether or not he definitely would not recognize them. They do say that the officials of the civil government were most courteous and endeavored during the entire proceedings to assist them, but were repeatedly overruled by the military officers. As soon as Messrs. Tuck and Gade saw that their further efforts would be of no avail they withdrew.

As I have stated to you, I fear that this proceeding may be a precedent by which large numbers of our men may be taken. I hope sincerely that this may be avoided, especially in view of the fact that at the selections which have taken place prior to the 17th I am advised that our cards were recognized at once and without difficulty.

I regret also that I am obliged to protest against the taking of men in the ravitaillement service simply because they may have been formerly engaged in skilled employments, such as railroading, blacksmithing, etc. It would seem that this is contrary to our understanding that only those who are chomeurs shall be taken. If a man is known to be working for us in good faith and has been so working for some time, then we have necessarily shown that he is not a chomeur, regardless of his former occupation. We have the additional ground that he is necessary for the ravitaillement service which is protected by a guarantee. I greatly fear that these exceptions will cause endless difficulties, because it departs from the simple principle laid down as above noted. I am not advised as to the number of these so-called skilled men engaged in our services but no doubt there are numbers of them. We did not attempt to make any exceptions when the cards were issued, but if it now results that these cards are recognized only in certain cases, then it will break down the system. When a man is taken not because he is a chomeur but because he is skilful in a particular line it must result on the

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE
À LONDRES.

Londres le 3 Juillet 1916



Monsieur ,

Le Représentant à Paris de la "Commission for Relief in Belgium" a fait parvenir à M. Briand copie d'une lettre qui vous a été adressée en Mai dernier par le Chef de votre mission dans le nord de la France .

Cette lettre nous fait connaitre la courageuse intervention de M. Poland auprès des autorités militaires allemandes qui ont du consentir à abandonner partiellement leurs projets d'évacuer, au mépris du droit des gens ,50,000 habitants de Lille de Roubaix et de Tourcoing .

M. Briand m'a chargé de vous remercier de la démarche de M. Poland et de vous faire savoir combien le Gouvernement Français vous était reconnais- reconnaissant de l'activité, du dévouement et du courage avec lesquels vos collaborateurs et vous même veniez en aide à nos malheureuses populations./.

Agréez, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée .

Paul Cambon

Monsieur Hoover,
"Commission for Relief in Belgium"
3 London Wall Buildings

LETTER, 3 JULY 1916, AMBASSADOR CAMBON TO HOOVER

basis of selection that it is not his present inability to find work but the necessities of the military authorities.

I am sure you will agree with me that this is a fundamental difference in the principle of selecting men. It will therefore be greatly appreciated by this Commission if the full and free exemption of men who are actually and bona fide engaged in the ravitaillement service could be made and we should be most pleased if instructions could be given accordingly.

Very respectfully yours

(Signed) Warren Gregory
Director

DOCUMENT NO. 422

Telegram, Hoover to C.R.B., New York, *regarding policy of C.R.B. in respect to deportation*

London, 20 November 1916

Relief Commission, New York

Am informed German authorities they expect to take two hundred fifty thousand work people from Belgium and Northern France. The whole operation is accompanied by the greatest suffering. German authorities apparently carefully weighed the possibility that this might result in breaking down Relief but determined to proceed in any event. We can see no hope in its suppression except pressure public opinion and protest by neutral governments. German procedure does not conflict with any actual guarantees in connection with Relief and we believe Allied Governments are so sympathetic to the welfare of the people left behind that we hope no drastic retaliation will ensue. Our impression is that press reports of actual incidents are rather understated than overdrawn. Am issuing a short statement as to our position through Associated Press. Do not believe it is in the interest of the Relief for us to offer any opinions in our own name.

Hoover

DOCUMENT NO. 423

Letter, Grey to Page, *requesting that the United States Government exert pressure on Germany to prevent the termination of relief work which may result from continuation of German policy*

Foreign Office, London
22 November 1916

His Excellency the Honorable W. H. Page
London

My Dear Ambassador:

1. I venture to ask Your Excellency to transmit a message from me personally to Your Excellency's Government in regard to a matter

of which you have fuller knowledge and which you can more fully explain than would be possible for His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington to do, were I to transmit the message through him.

2. The recent deportations from Belgium and the reported recrudescence of seizures and exports of Belgian foodstuffs cut at the root of the guarantees on which the whole relief work in Belgium is based, and while His Majesty's Government are no less keenly anxious than in the past to fulfil their duties toward the populations of the occupied territories, it will be clear to Your Excellency that it may at any moment become materially impossible to continue a work the basic guarantees of which have been destroyed. I should therefore be grateful if you could communicate by telegraph to your Government a personal appeal from me that they will exert themselves at Berlin and Brussels to see that this great work of international benevolence and co-operation which I think Your Excellency will be able to assure your Government has never been used by His Majesty's Government for any but purely neutral purposes, and which they have indeed regarded as of inevitable military advantage to their enemies, shall not be endangered or destroyed by acts which it is impossible for the Allied peoples to countenance or tolerate.

3. The constant efforts and valuable services rendered by yourself and the United States Minister at Brussels on behalf of this work emboldens me to hope that your Government will not allow an undertaking to be imperilled with which they have become so closely identified in the eyes of the world.

4. I have sent a similar letter to the Spanish Ambassador.

Believe me, my dear Ambassador

Yours sincerely

(Signed) GREY OF FALLODON

DOCUMENT NO. 424

Telegram, HOOVER TO C.R.B., NEW YORK, *stating policy of C.R.B. in respect to deportations*

LONDON, 24 November 1916

RELIEF COMMISSION, NEW YORK

We feel deeply that all questions involving the opinion of the Americans in relief or otherwise are entirely apart from any service which you or we can perform to Belgian people in amelioration of forced labor questions. It is a violation of the most elementary principles of human liberty and upon which America through the President should take a determined stand in protest. You will realize the impossibility of any open action from us as such would jeopardize other protection which we can give the Belgian people through the Relief. We are gratified by your support. We do not think time arrived to take up matter Washington until all efforts this side been exhausted which will require further ten days. Matter is now before

Belgian Government. The British Government assures us that there will be a solution to the matter which will satisfy responsibility and dignity of all Americans engaged in the work. Dr. Page authorizes me to say that unless Belgium will welcome full acceptance of all proposals[22] as to administrative measures in Belgium he will advise the withdrawal of the Commission.

RELIEF COMMISSION

DOCUMENT NO. 425

Telegram,[23] DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES AT BERLIN, *protesting against the deportations*

WASHINGTON, 29 November 1916

Mr. Grew is directed to obtain an interview with the German Chancellor as soon as possible and repeat to him the following:

"The Government of the United States has learned with the greatest concern and regret of the policy of the German Government to deport from Belgium a portion of the civilian population for the purpose of forcing them to labor in Germany, and is constrained to protest in a friendly spirit but most solemnly against this action, which is in contravention of all precedent and of those humane principles of international practice which have long been accepted and followed by civilized nations in their treatment of noncombatants in conquered territory. Furthermore, the Government of the United States is convinced that the effect of this policy, if pursued, will in all probability be fatal to the Belgian relief work, so humanely planned and so successfully carried out, a result which would be generally deplored and which, it is assumed, would seriously embarrass the German Government."

DOCUMENT NO. 426

Declaration[24] *of Allied Governments with regard to German policy of forced labor and deportations with an appeal to the neutral world*

LONDON, 5 December 1916

The German slave raids in Belgium and the deliberate paralyzation of local industries, on which Germany has entered in order to excuse the most barbaric infamy of which she has yet been guilty,

[22] At the demand of the Foreign Office the administration of relief within Belgium was reorganized and strengthened at this time and the participation of Americans defined. See chapter ii, Documents 59 to 63.

[23] U.S. Dept. of State, *European War No. 4.* Whitlock, *op. cit.,* II, 655–658.

[24] This article appeared in varying forms in nearly all the London daily papers of 5th December 1916.

threaten to put an end to the great work of the neutral Relief Commission, which has saved the Belgians from starvation.

The following declaration by the Allies, regarding the present state of Belgium was issued by the British Government last night, with the approval and concurrence of the French, Russian, and Italian Governments, who are issuing declarations to the same effect:

The Allies must warn the world of what is about to take place. As their own situation grows more desperate, the Central Empires intend to tear up every guarantee on which the work of the Relief Commission rests. They intend to cast aside all their promises, and to use Belgian foodstuffs and Belgian labor to support their own failing strength. The work of the relief which neutrals have built up for two years is about to lose its foundation, and is in danger of falling.

As soon as the financial resources of the Belgian Government were exhausted the Allies provided sums for the continuation of the work. They have furnished the Commission with shipping and all other necessary facilities. Further, they have done their utmost through the neutral Commission to protect Belgian industry from the disastrous consequence of invasion.

The Allies have only stipulated that the Germans should equally draw no advantage from the operations of the Commission; that they should not seize either imported or native supplies, and that the distribution of relief should not be used for the purpose of coercing Belgian workmen against their conscience.

These conditions which the Germans have pledged themselves to obey, have in the past been frequently violated. Belgian cattle have been driven out of Belgium to feed the German armies at the front, Belgian workmen are being coerced, and seizures and requisitions of foodstuffs have taken place throughout the occupied territories.

The Germans have also seized raw materials, machinery, and all the property of Belgian factories, essential to the maintenance of the national industry and have thus deliberately created unemployment and misery. These infractions of the German guarantees have in the past been disavowed in many cases by the German Government, and the Allies were content to rely on the neutral Commission to watch over and enforce the fulfilment of the conditions under which it worked.

Now, however, the situation is changing. The Germans have abandoned all pretense of respecting personal freedom in Belgium. They have deliberately ordered the suspension of public relief works supported by the neutral Commission and have openly, in spite of all their professions to the contrary, aimed at creating the unemployment which would furnish them with an excuse for deportations.

They have become themselves the "organizers of and co-operators with man-hunts" which they solemnly pledged themselves by the Brussels Convention of 1890 to put down in Africa. Further, the machinery of Belgian industry has now been totally destroyed and the export from Belgium of foodstuffs essential for the maintenance of the population has begun again on a large scale.

The Allies do not intend to change their policy or to desert the oppressed people of Belgium in this most critical moment of the war, but as it will be impossible for the relief work to continue if its basic guarantees are destroyed, they appeal to the civilized world, not on their own behalf, but on that of the innocent civilians who cannot protect themselves to see that this great work of international benevolence and co-operation which has grown up in the midst of war, and for which the Allies have advanced the money, shall not be endangered by treachery or destroyed by violence.

DOCUMENT NO. 427

General Report, by C.R.B., *relative to deportations to date.*

BRUSSELS, 30 December 1916

The requisition of men in Belgium has been carried out under the announced intention of furnishing work for the "sans-travail." The Commission for Relief in Belgium has been obliged to turn its attention most seriously to this expatriation of men, because included among the so-called chomeurs are a large number of its employees. It is not within the realm of the duties of the C.R.B. to protest against the general seizure of Belgians, but when it finds that the ravitaillement of Belgium is endangered by the fact of the requisition of its own personnel, it then feels that it should make vigorous protestation.

It should be borne in mind that the requisition of men is justified by the occupying authorities as a measure intended to relieve that part of the Belgian population which is out of work. *La Belgique* of 15th November 1916 prints a statement of von Bissing, the Governor-General of Belgium, which leaves no doubt as to the intentions of the occupying authorities. From this we shall quote. After discussing the cause of chomage in Belgium, which he attributes to the English blockade, the Governor-General says:

> Hundreds of people being without work in Belgium, and work abounding in Germany, the occupation of Belgian workmen in Germany has therefore become an economic and social necessity. [*Translation*]

It would be useless to enter into the details of the entire argument, but the substance of it is a justification of requisition of men on the grounds of lack of work in Belgium. After this the question naturally arises: are C.R.B. employees and voluntary workers to be considered in the class of unemployed? The object of this paper is to outline the situation in regard to the requisition of men in Belgium with special regard to the seizure of C.R.B. employees.

When the requisitions commenced, the C.R.B. considered that the ravitaillement would not be endangered. It thought this for very good reasons, which are ably presented by the Minister of the United States in a letter to His Excellency Baron von der Lancken dated 27th November 1916, a quotation from which follows:

> The Minister of the United States begs to draw the kind attention of His Excellency Baron von der Lancken to the following facts:
>
> In the guarantees which His Excellency the Governor-General has been good enough to give to the Minister Protectors of the Comité National on July 29, 1915, it was provided that the Comité National and the Commission for Relief in Belgium would have full liberty of action for the accomplishment of their mission. As a complement to these guarantees it has recently been agreed between the Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle C.N. and the Commission for Relief in Belgium that the latter were to remit to the members of the two organizations occupied in ravitaillement an identification card, like the enclosed pattern, which would be respected by the German authorities, and which would protect the bearers against possible requisition or deportation to Germany as chomeurs. [*Translation*]

The C.R.B. has issued these cards in each province, in good faith. The results which have come to us to date have been very discouraging.

It is interesting to note the form of procedure which was followed throughout Belgium, and for this the attached letter of John A. Gade will give an excellent idea. It is applicable to all the provinces except to Antwerp, where the guarantees were observed. This letter of Mr. Gade's, dated 17th November 1916, follows in toto.

MONS, 17 November 1916

DEAR SIR:

The selection of "chomeurs" from the city of Mons took place yesterday morning in the suburb of Nimy.

In order that there might be no confusion as to the employment of the C.R.B. or to their authorized cards, we called the day before at the office of the Kreischef as well as upon Captain Brande of the Kreischef's office, leaving samples of the two cards issued by our office, namely the earlier yellow card and the later white one, with German identifications.

Samples of both cards had likewise earlier been forwarded to the office of Mr. Haniel, President of the Civil Administration. At the office of the Kreischef, Mr. Tuck and I were instructed to present our men in a unit, and at the beginning of proceedings. We informed the Kreischef's office of the fact that these instructions would be followed carefully, and that our employees number approximately 175 persons, representing the Regional and Local Committees of Secours and Alimentation, the "Commission des Récoltes," the employees busied with distributing bread, busied in our mills, and on our docks.

Mr. Tuck and I marched our men to Nimy, and accompanied by Dr. Hilbert, presented them, cards in hand, in a unit for early inspection. Among our employees, some sixteen were taken, the exact names of whom will at once be submitted. We remonstrated vigorously, especially when six dock hands badly needed at this moment were taken from us. One of the officers interrogating our men replied to our remonstrances that we had altogether too many employees for him to be able to pass them. We observed that every man provided with one of our cards was essential to our work, and the number had most scrupulously been cut down to the smallest possible working force for the head office . . . .

After a preliminary selection of the men by three inferior officers, the major present informed the inferior officers that he could not permit the passing of so many of our men.

We handed the names of two of our men, just taken, and essential to us, as members of our Provincial Committee, to Mr. Haniel's Secretary. He made strenuous efforts to procure their release, but unavailingly.

In reply to my question, whether the white card with which our men had been provided, did not protect them, we were informed that the card in question was not acknowledged as affording such protection.

During the entire proceedings the officers of the civil government did much to assist us, but were repeatedly overruled by the officers of the military government.

Mr. Tuck and I remained until our efforts were exhausted and the selection from among our men was completed.

Respectfully yours

(Signed) JOHN A. GADE

It will be seen that the American delegates in the Hainaut did everything within their powers to conform to the wishes of the German authorities. Regardless of that, the number of the C.R.B. employees taken in the Hainaut amounted to over three hundred.

The Province of Namur has suffered severely. We have the lists of men taken, but we have not the full reports of proceedings that we have from other provinces.

In the Luxembourg the situation is perhaps the gravest. The number of our men taken far exceeds, in proportion to the number of service cards issued, that of other provinces, always excepting Antwerp.

A quotation from the letter of December 21 shows from the Luxembourg the existing state of affairs:

> This state of affairs has had as a result the disorganization of the services of ravitaillement and secours. Certain regional and local committees have been obliged to suspend their work completely and that until the arrival of help sent by our Central Administration. [*Translation*]

When this situation was brought to the attention of the Vermittlungsstelle, they promised a closer observance of the guarantees, as per postscript to a letter of the Director to Mr. Coppée dated December 8, 1916, which follows:

> I have this moment received a telephonic communication from Dr. Bruhn, informing me that they have telephoned to the Military Officer in the Luxembourg, to take our cards into very special consideration during the requisitions which are to take place in the next two or three days.
>
> I shall be very interested to know if this measure will succeed. [*Translation*]

Regardless of this, requisitions which have continued since then have showed no diminution in rigor. The question is serious, and unless these men are returned, the ravitaillement will be greatly hampered.

There is a better showing in the provinces of Brabant and the Limbourg.

In the Brabant twenty-four men with cards have been taken, and thirty-nine to whom cards had not yet been issued. From the point of view of the ravitaillement this number is not so alarming. The Limbourg fared well. In some parts of the province the requisitioning officers showed a disposition to respect our cards. This was particularly true of the town and outlying hamlets where the C.R.B.

card-bearers were even exempted from appearing at the requisition. Their cards were stamped at the "Meldeamt" the day before.

Even at this, out of the whole province thirty-three were taken.

In the last report we spoke of the excellent showing in the province of Antwerp. Both at Antwerp and Malines the C.R.B. cards have been respected. Only two men were taken, and these were in the train before the protest was filed. But the very fact that our C.R.B. card-bearers were exempted at Antwerp is the strongest argument why they should have been regarded in the others. There has been a direct violation of the guarantee not to hamper the C.R.B. in the ravitaillement of Belgium.

As was stated in the report of last week, the C.R.B. has done everything in its powers to procure the repatriation of its employees. From the beginning of the requisition the Director and the Department of Inspection and Control have been in touch with the Vermittlungsstelle. In the Luxembourg, as we have above stated, the telephone message of Dr. Bruhn that the requisitioning officers had special orders to observe our cards had no result. Finally we have succeeded in procuring a form, approved by the Vermittlungsstelle C.N., on which we are to inscribe the names of our employees. These names, on separate sheets, are then to be handed to the Vermittlungsstelle, C.N. They have promised, in their letter of 20th December 1916 to look into each case, and if the complaint is found to be justified they will without further information arrange for the return of the individual in question. A copy of this letter and a sample of the form to be used follow in the appendix.

The number of our men taken up to date in the different provinces is as follows:

Provinces	Men taken having cards	Men taken, entitled to cards but not having received them
Hainaut	453	..
Namur	250	15
Luxembourg	234	9
Limbourg	30	..
Brabant	24	39
	991	63

DOCUMENT NO. 428

Paraphrase of telegram, Secretary of State to Page, *requesting Hoover's opinion on deportations*

Washington, 29 December 1916

American Embassy, London

Department would be glad to have Hoover's opinion for its confidential information regarding continuance of Belgian deportations,

whether there has been any change in the policy of the German authorities since the protest of this Government on November 29.

LANSING

DOCUMENT NO. 429

Statement,[25] HOOVER FOR DEPARTMENT OF STATE, *regarding deportations from Belgium*

LONDON, 2 January 1917

There has been no apparent change in German policy since the President's protest, deportation continuing on a large scale—now apparently three to five thousand per week. Despite assertions made to the President, no distinction is made as to whether deportees are unemployed or not and in fact there seems a definite policy to secure all members of certain trades and the desire to secure these and other skilled labor leads press gangs to deliberate choice of those in actual employment. Moreover, they have taken all together, up to 15th December, over 700 persons employed by the Commission, despite the exhibit of credentials and their specific agreement with us to the contrary and against our protest. Furthermore, our American members have witnessed the taking of several thousands, particularly from Flanders to Northern France, and together with local French people, are now being forced to work for the German Army in the preparation of timber and fascines for the trenches. Refusal to perform such labor has here been met with refusal of food and other brutal acts. It is also reported to us from what we believe to be reliable sources that Belgian and French civilians have been required to work on trench construction in Northern France and certain deportees have been recently returned wounded by shell-fire. Of the deportees to Germany, some 300 have been returned to the Hainaut Province, of whom a part were apparently returned because physically unable to work, but the remainder maintain that they were returned because of their steadfast passive resistance to pressure, although they were entirely refused food over a considerable period and were ultimately returned for their recalcitrancy. Their appearance confirms this.

Altogether, the assurances given the President that only unemployed were taken and that they are not employed on military work or brutally treated, are absolutely untrue, not only before but since the assurances were given. It does appear that the civil government in Brussels has made some efforts to prevent brutality in selection, to confine selections to unemployed, and to protect the employees of the Commission, and they have even solicited complaints, but they appear unable to control the military press gangs or effect any remedies.

[25] Appears in abbreviated form in U.S. Dept. of State, *European War No. 4*, p. 361.

It does not appear to us, however, that protest from the President, based on failure to carry out assurance given as to the method or purpose of these deportations is consonant with the attitude that the Americans should take, for the real issue is the very act of forced deportation as being a violation of the most primary human liberty and international law. Any protest on method or purpose alone will be construed as a recognition by America of the right to force civilians from their homes and country.

I am now convinced that the Entente Governments will take no action against the Relief as a consequence of these deportations, as they are convinced that stoppage of relief would be no remedy, and, they generally recognize, would only accentuate the misery.

The hourly witnessing of these outrages and the prayers to the Americans from a people now in a state of complete terror, since Americans have been so peculiarly their protectors during the past two years, make it difficult for us to control the natural feeling of our staff and we can only hope that no untoward incident may occur. My impression is that any further protest at the moment in the name of humanity and international law would have no other effect than to produce irritation and the usual denials, although if other means fail a renewed protest should be delivered with the utmost vigor as a definition of America's attitude and as a deterrent to other outrages which may be contemplated.

For immediate practical purposes, in the hope of remedying or ameliorating this particular evil, I would like to suggest a personal and private message from the President to the Emperor, in the belief that the Emperor is intrinsically a humane man and generally desirous of promoting peace, such message to take the general line that the constant filtration of reports of these deportations and their surrounding circumstances is today one of the strongest stimuli to resolution for continuance of the war amongst the population in the Entente countries, and has afforded an unparalleled basis of anti-German propaganda among neutrals which no assertion of benevolent intentions can counteract, for the fundamental basis of deportation and compulsion of the population to work against its will and conscience being wrong can only bring suffering and criticism; that if Germany is genuinely anxious for peace she can scarcely hope for sympathetic sentiment to grow abroad to that end coincident with these acts, and that a total cessation of the deportations and forced labor and the return of the deported Belgians and French to their homes would be not only an act of great magnanimity but also of the greatest assistance in the promotion of peace sentiment.

Although the deportations continued despite diplomatic protests and a hostile world opinion, the Allies did not carry out their threat to put a stop to relief. They recognized, as did the members of the Commission, that while the responsibility might be placed on the Germans, it was the Belgians

and French who would suffer the consequences. The Commission did what it could to mitigate the suffering caused by this policy, and to secure the return to Belgium of relief employees who had been deported.

DOCUMENT NO. 430

Note, WHITLOCK TO VON DER LANCKEN, *protesting against deportations of employees of C.R.B. and C.N.*

BRUSSELS, 10 January 1917

The Minister of the United States has the honor to refer to his notes No. 4920, dated 27 November 1916, and 4944, dated 28 November 1916, concerning the carrying away of members and employees of the Commission for Relief in Belgium and of the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation, deported into Germany as unemployed.

His Excellency the Baron von der Lancken will remember that the Governor-General was good enough to give, in the month of July 1915, to the Minister Protectors of the Comité National the assurance that the Commission for Relief in Belgium and the Comité National could enjoy all the liberty of action necessary to carry out the mission which has devolved upon them by the contracts arrived at between the General Government and the representatives of the neutral Powers. In addition and in order to prevent the application of the steps taken by the German authority relative to the work of the unemployed from prejudicing these guarantees, the Commission for Relief in Belgium, in accord with the German Vermittlungsstelle C.N. distributed to the members, employees, and workpeople of the various organizations connected with the Comité National special cards certifying their capacity, thus putting the German agents employed to carry out these steps, in a position to be able to avoid error as regards the said members, employees, and workpeople.

The Minister Protectors have been able to confirm that these cards have been delivered exclusively to persons who really have the right to them and that a very strict surveillance has been exercised to avoid abuse. They recognize willingly that in the province of Antwerp the cards of the Commission for Relief in Belgium have been taken into consideration and that their bearers have been exempt from deportation; but they regret to learn that in other districts of the country not only has no account been taken of them but the military authorities have torn them up, saying that they were without value.

Thus, up to the present, in the territory of the General Government, about a thousand men who bore the official card of the Commission for Relief in Belgium have been deported into Germany; the figure amounts to 1,054 if those are added who had a right to the card and were picked out for deportation before it was possible to furnish them with it.

The exact figures are, it appears, the following:

Provinces	Persons taken away although furnished with cards	Persons taken away not yet furnished with the card to which they had the right
Luxembourg	234	9
Brabant	24	39
Namur	250	15
Limbourg	30	..
Hainaut	453	..
	991	63

As regards Luxembourg particularly, it has been brought to the knowledge of the Minister Protectors that men have been taken in spite of the protestations of the presidents of the local and regional committees who were present at the requisitions and that no account was taken of the cards of the Commission for Relief in Belgium. It appears even that men were taken away in certain districts only on presentation of that card; in others they only escaped deportation by not showing the card of which they were bearers. The result of these facts has been, it appears, to completely disorganize the alimentation and assistance service in certain parts of that province; several regional and local committees found themselves, it is added, obliged to totally suspend their work; others have experienced, on account of the anxiety of the populations, the greatest difficulty in finding on the spot the staff strictly indispensable to provisionally replace the deported agents.

His Excellency von der Lancken will certainly realize that this state of affairs is contrary to the assurances which have been given to the Minister Protectors.

The Minister of the United States thinks it right to recall further that in the course of negotiations between the German Vermittlungsstelle C.N. and the Commission for Relief in Belgium, the German Vermittlungsstelle C.N. kindly gave the assurance that the necessary steps would be taken to repatriate the members, employees, and workpeople of the Comité National, wrongly deported.

Mr. Whitlock is convinced that the steps promised will produce their effect; but he considers that the question has such a character of gravity that it appears to him to be his duty to inform the Governor-General of it by the kind intermediary of His Excellency Baron von der Lancken. He is confident that His Excellency the Governor-General will be good enough to give him the assurance that the members, employees, and workpeople of the Comité National already deported into Germany will be repatriated as soon as possible and that the necessary steps will be taken to assure that in the future no more members of the above-named organizations will be deported.

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 431

Letter, HOOVER TO PAGE, *respecting deportations of C.R.B. employees*

LONDON, 10 January 1917

His Excellency the Honorable W. H. Page, London

DEAR MR. PAGE:

Since furnishing you the memorandum and cable on deportation I have received a further report from Brussels[26] of which I enclose two copies herewith, in case you wish to forward one to Washington. You will see by this report that up to the 30th December, 991 men, employed on relief work, have been taken, who actually presented their cards of identification in the manner agreed between us and the German authorities. A further 63 have been taken, who were not in actual possession of their cards so that a distinction might be drawn.

The taking of these men accords very ill with the constant assertion of the German authorities that they are only taking the actually unemployed. We have a vast amount of data relating to the details of deportation, but it does not seem to me worth encumbering your files with repeated proof of the same things. You will realize, of course, that while we protest against the taking of our people, we are very anxious that American authorities should not make the commitment, for which the Germans are apparently so anxious, by acquiescing in principle of deportation by negotiations as to failure to carry out the deportation according to assurances as to methods.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

By 1918 the Germans had gone beyond deportations to Germany, and were compelling Belgian and French beneficiaries of relief to labor on military construction. The Commission no longer had American representatives in Belgium, and it could do nothing except request the C.R.B. representative in Brussels to raise the question with the C.N., the C.F., and the Spanish-Dutch Committee for such action as they deemed advisable under the circumstances.

DOCUMENT NO. 432

Letter, C.R.B. LONDON TO C.R.B. REPRESENTATIVE IN BRUSSELS, *regarding the employment on military works of Belgian and French citizens receiving relief*

LONDON, 19 September 1918

Commission for Relief in Belgium, Brussels

We would very much like to have you discuss the following serious situation with M. Francqui, M. Le Blan, and the Spanish and Dutch

[26] See Document 427.

directors of the neutral committee, and ask that you send by first practicable mail their separate and independent judgment as to the course to be followed, and your own recommendations.

The grave action of the Germans in so working that now actually, in occupied France and Flanders and to a considerable extent in Belgium, imported rations are being issued to so-called "free" laborers from overseas imports, brings about a situation which threatens the entire ravitaillement. Free labor was first employed for non-military purposes, and the C.R.B. continued to feed it. Gradually it has been arranged with German cunning so that it is now largely employed in actual military construction, and we still feed it. Such labor is employed in building trenches, military railways, making trench timbers, getting out and placing concrete for military work. This is in direct violation of The Hague Convention and the Comity of Nations. What shall be done?

The alternatives seem to be, first, to allow the present situation to continue, which would make almost inevitable the exploitation of the people by those means of indirect pressure which the brutal conquerors of the country have developed, with the almost further certainty of refusal of the governments to allow the feeding of the occupied regions to continue, just as it was refused that food might be sent to the starving victims of the deportations; second, that a strong protest be presented through the protecting ministers and a demand made that the employment of Belgians and French on work of military importance cease, with the statement that if it is continued ravitaillement of these regions where it exists will not be allowed—at the same time making a complete statement in the press of the neutral countries as to the whole situation.

The results, if the Germans do not cease, would be of course most grievous, as many helpless persons would starve along with those working for the Germans. How could such a regulation be applied, e.g., what limits might be given? Would it cover all France and Flanders? The special workers for the Germans only? Who could determine between military and non-military work? Could the C.H.N. delegates do this? Would there be danger of the Germans' seizing the native products and devoting them exclusively to their labor battalions or workers for the Germans? These considerations we feel that you are far better able to discuss than we, and the Belgian, French, and British Governments as well as the C.R.B. will take no action until we hear from you, but we hope you will discuss the question fully in giving your recommendation and will recognize that it can hardly continue.

3. *The Deportations in Northern France. April–May 1916*

In Northern France, where military rule and methods prevailed, there were also wholesale deportations. Here the object was not to force French workers to labor in German

industry but to transfer industrial workers to the agricultural districts of France in the German Army Zone. The methods by which this was accomplished were harsh and inhumane. Without warning the military authorities seized several thousand persons in Lille without regard to sex or capability for agricultural labor, herded them on trains and distributed them in rural communes.[27]

The intervention of the C.R.B. described in the following documents was striking and effective. The Germans first suspended the deportations pending investigation and then abandoned the policy. Later four or five thousand women, children, and infirm were returned to their homes.

DOCUMENT NO. 433

Memorandum, by POLAND, *describing conversations at Charleville with Quartermaster General Zoellner and others regarding the deportations from Lille*

ROTTERDAM, 8 May 1916

About the 25th April, Count Wengersky advised me that it was the intention of the General Staff to evacuate 50,000 persons from Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing, to the agricultural districts of Vervins and Charleville, where there was insufficient rural population to plant and harvest the crops. He advised that, as far as possible, volunteers would be asked for, whole families would be transported together when practicable, the main object was to obtain laborers, and, in general, laborers only would be selected. I told him that while in principle we could not object to the moving of the population of these cities to points where they could support themselves, still we anticipated that such a movement could be carried out only with disturbance and suffering. On the request of Captain Weber and Captain zur Strassen, arrangements were made for adjusting the food supply to accommodate the changed distribution of the population which might follow.

On April 29th, our representatives came in from Lille with a history of the most distressing conditions resulting from the manner in which the German edict had been carried out. It appeared that there were no volunteers and that, despite the protests of the people,

[27] There are many contemporary accounts of this incident. A German version is given in *Vorwärts,* 17th September 1916. The British Press Bureau issued an eyewitness account by a French resident of Lille. A French official version is given in *Rapports et procès-verbaux d'enquête de la commission instituée en vue de constater les actes commis par l'ennemi en violation du droit des gens,* Sixième Rapport.

families were broken up, wives were taken out of families, young girls and young women sent away, the women being put in one part and the men in another. Many young women from eighteen to twenty-five years old were taken out of families and herded together, the most respectable being placed, in some cases, with most undesirable characters and sent off without proper protection and supervision and with no clear idea of their destination. The distress of the population was intense, bordering on despair and insurrection. In the midst of reports as to these conditions, during our staff meeting, we were called to the telephone and advised by General Headquarters that we (the director and representatives of Northern France) were invited to proceed to Charleville by a special train to meet the American Ambassador, Mr. Gerard, who was then negotiating with the General Staff in connection with the answer of the German authorities to the Note from the United States in regard to the submarine warfare.[28] The invitation was accepted and the party conveyed to Charleville, where it arrived about 5:00 P.M. Shortly thereafter a reception and tea was arranged, at which were present: the American Ambassador Mr. Gerard, Secretary of Legation Mr. Grew, General Zoellner, Count Wengersky, Captains zur Strassen and Weber, Oberleutnants Fritz and Paul Neuerbourg, Baron von Boecklin, and Baron von . . . .

The proper opportunity occurring, I begged leave to call General Zoellner's attention to the distressing conditions which had arisen in Lille, as a result of the evacuation movement. It was stated by the Director that three considerations might have, in our opinion, decided the German authorities to carry out this movement:

Firstly, lack of food in the congested districts of Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing. This condition, however, would immediately disappear if the increased ration of 19,000 tons of flour, etc., which had been offered by the C.R.B., were introduced, and which depended only on the guarantee of the German authorities to issue 200 grams of potatoes per capita per day. As it was estimated that this might be accomplished by importing 25,000 tons of potatoes from Prussia, it was hoped that the German authorities would immediately furnish the guarantee.

Secondly, the idea of punishment for the slight disturbances and rioting at Roubaix, where the shops were broken into for the purpose of obtaining food. So far from having a salutary effect, it was pointed out that the extreme agitation of the population must have produced much worse conditions from a military point of view than had before existed.

Thirdly, if the not unreasonable desire of the German authorities to take the idle population from the above points and move them to agricultural districts, where labor was badly needed, was to be successful, the movement should have been confined to actual workmen, rather than to those unable even to support themselves.

One of the considerations which most strongly influenced the

[28] The "Sussex" negotiations.

Commission to undertake, at the request of the German authorities, the relief work for the people of the occupied territory of the North of France was the suggestions by the occupying authorities that a large number of the population be evacuated across the line, would be carried out and that our importations of food and other forms of relief might be a means of saving the people from the misery and distress which must attend any such movement. On behalf of the Commission I therefore respectfully protested against the evacuation and begged that it be stopped.

The actual facts were vouched for by Messrs. Wellington and Richardson. Captain zur Strassen and Count Wengersky maintained that the movement was being carried out now in a proper and satisfactory manner. Oberleutnant Fritz Neuerbourg and Captain Weber were silent. General Zoellner expressed himself as much surprised and stated that the condition described was not intended in his order. He was requested to consult Oberleutnant Paul Neuerbourg and had a private talk with him at once, at which it was understood Oberleutnant Paul Neuerbourg gave the facts as above.

Ambassador Gerard was much affected by the statements. General Zoellner advised that an immediate investigation would be made and the trouble remedied. It was understood that the general commanding the Lille operations had been summoned to Charleville immediately. The evacuation was suspended by telegraphic orders.

Our next news was on the 5th of May, when the representatives from Northern France again reported at Brussels. Apparently the movement had been stopped and it was understood that it would be confined to workmen only if resumed but this has not yet been officially confirmed.

Our imperfect information is that about 11,000[29] of the population have so far been evacuated. We shall endeavor to remedy any extreme cases of hardship resulting from this order and have indeed been promised *unofficially* that this will be done.

It should be noted that at the moment the relations between the C.R.B. and the occupying German forces in the North of France are very strained and it is difficult to accomplish much. It is considered probable that the result to the people of the North of France would be exceedingly unfavorable should the attention of the Allied Governments be called to these conditions through the offices of the C.R.B. until further reports are made. For the moment the action seems to have been ended. Ambassador Gerard offered to use his influence with the Emperor to modify these conditions if subsequent reports indicated to him that the German authorities themselves had not taken steps to do so.

(Signed) W. B. Poland
Director for Belgium and the North of France

[29] The 11,000 first reported proved to be actually 22,000 of whom 300 to 400 women, girls, and invalids have been returned in accordance with suggestion of the C.R.B. [Poland's note.]

DOCUMENT NO. 434

Memorandum, by L. C. Wellington, C.R.B. Delegate at Lille, *describing the deportations from Lille*

London, 6 October 1916

1. The seed for the idea of removing a part of the inhabitants from the most congested district in the North of France occupied by the German troops seems to have been sown by a small riot which occurred in the city of Roubaix in the month of March. Exact facts cannot be given, but, in general, about two hundred people forced an entrance to a few small grocery stores in this city and seized what small amounts of food were to be had. It is assumed that when this was reported to the German Headquarters of the western front at Charleville, the conclusion was drawn that conditions were such that riots might again occur; that this one in particular was due to too great a congestion of an idle laboring population, which, under the circumstances, could not be sufficiently fed to prevent the recurrence of an uprising in one form or another. It was therefore decided at General Headquarters that it would be wise to remove fifty thousand people from the laboring classes, give them work in the fields of the agricultural districts of the North of France, and pay them a small salary. This scheme in theory was not a bad one, had it been possible to carry it out without undue hardship to the laborers themselves. It would place them in regions where it would be easier for them to supplement the diet which they receive from the Commission for Relief in Belgium (this Commission will be referred to hereafter as the C.R.B.); it would give them employment and a small salary.

2. It was therefore decided, at first, to test out this theory by a call for volunteers from the laboring classes to work in the fields. It is to be understood that the three cities of Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing are the largest in the most thickly populated and most highly industrial region of Northern France; fully eighty per cent of the population is made up of laborers who, in ordinary times, are employed in textile mills and who have been accustomed to life in the city for generations. They consequently know nothing of agricultural labor, and it is not surprising that upon this call for volunteers there was response from no more than thirty-five or forty individuals.

3. Nevertheless it was considered feasible at General Headquarters to go ahead with the theory and to force the population to comply. Fifty thousand was decided upon as an outside limit for the number of inhabitants to be deported and in order to make the necessary arrangements for the feeding of these people after they had been transported from the cities where they dwelt to the agricultural districts, a visit was made by Captain Weber.[30] A conference was held

[30] It may be explained that the North of France is divided into six districts for the purpose of feeding the population, and that in each district

between Captain Weber, the French Committee at Lille, and the American delegate of the Lille district. Captain Weber was sent to Lille as a delegate from General Headquarters. He requested, in the first place, that an arrangement should be made whereby the three cities from which inhabitants were to be removed should continue their war payments to their respective inhabitants. These payments are of two kinds—"allocations militaires" and "chomage," or money paid by French municipalities to inhabitants thrown out of work owing to the war. In the second place, Captain Weber requested that the C.R.B. should transfer a sufficient quantity of food from the Lille district to supply the fifty thousand inhabitants who were to be removed from the Lille district to those of Vervins and Charleville. This last matter was taken up by the German captain at the Brussels office of the C.R.B. and consent was given. The members of the French Committee at Lille objected very strongly to the whole proposition of the removal of the inhabitants; firstly, from the point of view of the hardships that would necessarily result and also from the impossibility which there would be in continuing the war payments to the individuals who were to be removed.

4. The deportations commenced on 22d April, the day before Easter, and the order, coming through the German ranks as a military command, was naturally carried out in a blunt, brutal, military way. A whole regiment was placed in a given quarter of the city and machine guns were placed in the streets, and six, eight, or ten fully armed soldiers entered each house to remove all inhabitants capable of doing field labor.

The present account is given on information obtained from the acting mayor and other members of the French Committee at Lille as well as from the actual observation of the writer. The situation which ensued throughout the three cities in question is beyond description. Every household, whether entered or not, was thrown into panic for fear that some of its members might be taken sooner or later. Whatever his position, no individual was exempt from approach, and the fact that over twenty thousand people were shipped off in eight days is testimony to the methods that were adopted. If any explanations were made they seemed to the individual like simple pretexts for some form of cruelty. Each officer had orders to deliver a given number of souls at a designated point, and they were herded through the streets on foot or in cars like so many beasts, being made to wait hours in the cold. Any reluctant attitude was treated with the bayonet point. Industrial schools, with several hundred young women in them, were entered and cleared of all their pupils, who, often without the chance to see their parents, were

the C.R.B. places one of its representatives who co-operates with the District French Committee and the German officer assigned to the duties of controlling the work done both by the Committee and the American representative. Captain Weber is the officer for the rural district of Vervins. [Wellington's note.]

ordered into tram cars and sent to a railway station, from which they were shipped to no one knew where. Girls of good family, women up to the age of fifty, and men up to the age of sixty-five were taken from all parts of the cities without any discrimination or consideration as to what class of society they were from. Girls who had known nothing but the protection of refined homes were thrown together with prostitutes or men of low life. The lot of people were all examined as a matter of form by a German Red Cross doctor, but this examination seems to have been very superficial in most cases, many of which were passed when the individual was suffering from one disease or another and evidently incapable of doing field labor. Monsieur Crepy, the "Adjoint du Maire," tells of watching an examination in which several extreme cases of varicose veins[31] were passed upon by the doctors, and when their condition was noticed by an ordinary German officer and referred again to the doctor the reply was to the effect that they were quite capable of doing hard labor. It was evident to the French men of the Committee that the task of removing the people was often an odious one to the officers carrying out their instructions. The writer came in personal contact with the case of an employee in one of the shops of Lille. It was taken for granted everywhere that people who already had employment were not to be removed, but this distinction does not seem to have been made with very great care, for in this particular case the girl in question not only had employment but was provided by her employer with a certificate to show where and what her employment was. She was seized on the street when going to her work, was given half an hour to pack up what she wanted, and then marched off. By good fortune she passed an officer who had been one of her clients; she appealed to him and was released. One could go on and cite fifty or more tragic cases where families were broken up and consequent sorrow entered the houses of the three cities. Even the "Adjoint du Maire" himself of the city of Lille was not exempt. His house was entered, and it was only upon an explanation of his identity and position that his own servants were protected. We cite the case of a tram conductor who returned at nightfall to find that his wife had been removed during the day. This is typical of hundreds of others.

It was arranged by the C.R.B. to give these unfortunate people a supplementary ration for two days for the time during which they were being transported from their homes to their destination in the rural districts. Subsequently, the Commission has done all in its power to relieve this extreme distress by providing any extra clothing or food that has been available.

5. Naturally, the American representative wished to do all in his power to alleviate the situation in any way possible, and consequently an explanation of the tragedy was made in detail at Brussels

[31] This disease is common among the textile workers. [Wellington's note.]

at the end of the first week. It is the custom to have a reunion of the American representatives in the north of France in Brussels every Saturday morning. Owing to a most happy coincidence, this Saturday, April 29, was the date when Ambassador Gerard had come on from Berlin to Charleville with the German Kaiser and the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, for conference at General Headquarters with reference to the American Note on the "Sussex" affair. Ambassador Gerard requested an interview with the American representatives of the C.R.B. in the North of France and it was accordingly arranged that they, together with the Brussels Director of the C.R.B., should go to Charleville that afternoon on a special train provided by Headquarters. It was decided that the least the American Commission could do would be to bring the tragedy of the Lille deportations to the attention of Ambassador Gerard and, if possible, to obtain from General Headquarters some action for an amelioration of the situation. Therefore at Charleville the matter was discussed in detail with the German officers concerned, in the presence of Ambassador Gerard and Quartermaster General Zoellner. It was argued by the Americans that from a military point of view a greater risk than before was being taken in rousing the antagonism of the Lille population, and that from the point of view of the C.R.B. the evictions were much against its wishes, inasmuch as one of the chief objects of the relief work is to feed the population sufficiently so that individuals will not be forced to leave their homes in order to be properly nourished. Arguments to uphold the theory for the evacuation of a portion of the congested population were given by the German officers present. After a general discussion there were conferences held apart, both with Ambassador Gerard and Quartermaster General Zoellner, who were given in detail the tragic and impractical aspects of the situation. It is to be noted that all the arguments of the American representatives at Lille and of the Brussels Director were upheld by the German officer, Lieutenant Paul Neuerbourg, who had been at Lille to see and hear the details as they appeared on the ground. Credit is due to him for this support, both from the point of view of sympathy shown for the French people and for the risk which he took in combatting the arguments of officers of much superior rank. It goes without saying that this support lent great weight to the objections advanced by the C.R.B. A further conference was held that evening between Ambassador Gerard and Quartermaster General Zoellner, the result being that, instead of fifty thousand approximately, twenty thousand individuals were sent away from their homes.

6. The month following between three and four hundred individuals were returned owing to sickness, but up to the 1st August 1916, when the writer returned to the United States, no further action had been taken to repatriate them.

7. It is difficult for me to describe the resultant suffering which was visited upon these miserable people in the localities where they were put to work. This can be more accurately done by those Ameri-

cans who have been in the agricultural districts which received the "Evacués." It must be understood, however, that any avowed attempt to make investigations of this sort would be met with a flat refusal from the German authorities who control the work of the C.R.B. and who keep its representatives under the closest surveillance. Nevertheless, I can cite my visit to the village of Queant, in the district of Valenciennes. About forty people from Lille, the majority of them women, were unloaded here. I was not allowed to speak with them, but I spoke a few words with the "Maire," who asked why they had been sent to his village. "To work in the fields," I told him. "But," he said, with a look of mystification, "these are girls of nice families; they know nothing of field labor; and, moreover, we have already more than enough Russian prisoners to do that kind of work. There is no place to put these new people. The town is choked with troops. They swallow everything and there is not even a bit of straw for our friends from Lille to sleep on, much less a roof to put over their heads. My wife and I are doing what we can, but there is very little left here."

It is known that the unfortunates were carted about in motor trucks, unloaded, and reloaded like merchandise. In some cases the promised salaries were paid by the Germans either entirely or in part in food instead of in cash.

A vivid imagination is not required to make conclusions as to the inevitable dangers to which particularly the women were exposed. Quartered in the same houses with troops, forced to work in the fields, to harvest the German crop, the story of the inhabitants of Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing is an "Evangeline" too horrible for poetical treatment.

Needless to say the story of the Lille deportations lost nothing in the telling in the Entente press, and the Allied propagandists made the most of the incident as another example of German "frightfulness." There is no doubt of the brutality with which the evacuation of these unfortunate and innocent people was carried out, but it is clear that this brutality was not a deliberate policy of the higher German authorities. It is significant that in the confidential statement he was asked to prepare for the United States Department of State, Hoover discredited the extravagancies of the propagandists, exculpated the German authorities of intentional brutalities and placed the responsibility where it belonged—on individuals of subordinate rank who appear to have been both incompetent and insensible. The historical importance of the following document is obvious.

DOCUMENT NO. 435

Letter, HOOVER TO LANSING, *reporting on the Lille deportations*

LONDON, 10 October 1916

The Hon. Robert Lansing,
Secretary of State, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. LANSING:

I have a request from the American Embassy in London to furnish you with a short, confidential statement with regard to the evacuation of certain persons from Lille during April 1916.

In this matter, I send you herewith:

1. Memorandum prepared at the time by Mr. Poland, who was then our Director in Belgium and Northern France;
2. Memorandum prepared by Mr. Wellington, our staff representative in Lille;
3. English translation, of the brochure issued by the French Government on the matter.

Our summary of the incident is as follows:

1. The German General Staff determined upon the evacuation of a large number of people from the congested urban sections around Lille into the agricultural sections of Northern France. The objective was two-fold—to relieve the congestion and food difficulties in the urban areas and at the same time to furnish more labor to the agricultural sections in order to increase the productivity of these areas. They initially called for volunteers, but, securing none, gave orders that compulsion should be used.

2. These orders were carried out with great brutality. People were seized, regardless of class, sex, and family membership. They were loaded on to railway trains on a few hours' notice and dumped into agricultural districts without any preparation; all sexes were thrown promiscuously in the open, under conditions of the utmost hardship.

3. The immediate protests at the German Headquarters by Mr. Poland, backed by Messrs. Wellington and Richardson, all of the Relief Commission, later on seconded by Mr. Gerard, brought about an investigation as to the methods employed; a suspension of the measures and ultimately rescission of the project. Furthermore as a result of the investigation initiated some four or five thousand women, children, and infirm have been returned; the balance have now settled amongst the agricultural population and we do not believe that they are specially discontented.

4. The Relief Commission provided foodstuffs for the people en route, gave them extra rations upon their arrival, and provided them with blankets, shoes, etc., in the refugee camps, generally protecting them in the best manner we could with the limited resources at our disposal.

5. It is our belief that the brutality of the operation was largely the fault of the local commandants and lack of adequate arrange-

ments for the reception of and distribution of the evacués. We do not believe that any such brutalities were committed with intent of the high authorities. We believe they honestly and expeditiously corrected the matter as far as they were able when it came to their attention, and we are informed that disciplinary measures were taken. We do not believe the stories of rape, concubinage, etc., spread in the propagandist press.

The incident is one of sufficiently terrible order, but as things go in this war it has resulted in less volume of human suffering than many other continuing barbarities in Europe.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) Herbert Hoover

Chapter XI

POLAND

The provinces of Belgium and Northern France were not the only regions where great armies marched and fought, where field and town were devastated, where homes were invaded by hunger and disease. Eastern Galicia, Congress Poland, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, and Rumania were invaded, fought over, and held, for varying periods, under the military rule of the invader. All did not suffer equally, nor were any—with possibly one exception—in a situation comparable to Belgium and Northern France. The occupied territories of Eastern Europe were, as far as food was concerned, normally self-supporting or nearly so; and hence, though the closing of their frontiers increased destitution and suffering, it did not mean famine for a large industrial population. This is not to say that there was no need for relief, for the need was very great, but this need was primarily for aid to individuals, the victims of destitution or disease, not for the organized revictualment of the occupied area. Extensive and invaluable individual relief, especially medical relief, was delivered in certain of these territories by the American Red Cross and several private organizations of American or European origin, but the only attempt to organize general revictualment—in Congress Poland—failed because the belligerents could not agree on the conditions under which this relief should be given. One reason for the refusal of the belligerents to make the necessary concessions has already been suggested; that is, that there was less need of general revictualment even in partially industrialized Congress Poland than in Belgium. But more than this, when these negotiations were undertaken, the siege warfare had begun and neither the Allies nor the Central Powers were willing to concede anything which might limit the effectiveness of the blockade or hamper measures of defense against it.

1. *The Origin of the Polish Relief Project. February–December 1915*

The C.R.B. first came in contact with the Polish relief problem in February 1915, when Hoover was in Berlin at-

tempting to secure a cessation of German financial levies in Belgium and to provide for the financing of relief.[1] At this time representatives of the Rockefeller Foundation, who had just completed a tour of inspection in the districts of Russian Poland held by the German forces, were discussing with the Berlin authorities a plan for the relief of Poland. Hoover did not take part in these Polish relief negotiations except to give the Rockefeller representatives the benefit of the Commission's experience in Belgium and to urge that both relief efforts should stand together in insisting on a satisfactory basis of treatment from the Germans. The Rockefeller-German agreements, when completed, set up an International Commission for Relief in Poland, to be financed by the Foundation and the German Government.[2] The next step was to purchase food. American representatives of the International Commission attempted to make purchases in Rumania, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia, but without success. They also asked the British Government to permit oversea imports to Poland via Rotterdam, but the British would agree to this only on condition that the United States Government assume official responsibility for the work and for the observance of the Rockefeller-German agreement.[3]

By mid-summer 1915, when the International Commission's negotiations broke down, the military situation in Poland was rapidly changing, and the need of relief increas-

[1] See chapter iv, Documents 133–142.

[2] The headquarters of this International Commission were to be in Berlin. Ambassador Gerard was appointed Chairman; Eliot Wadsworth, Director General; the Dresdner Bank of Berlin, Treasurer. Certain German committees and Polish local bodies were to co-operate with the Foundation. The Rockefeller Foundation representatives engaged in these negotiations were: Dr. Wickliffe Rose, Director General of the International Health Commission of the Foundation; E. P. Bicknell, National Director of the American Red Cross; Henry James, Jr., manager of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research; Colin Herrle, Secretary. See E. P. Bicknell's articles, "The Battlefield of Poland," *The Survey*, 2 Dec. 1916, and "Begging Bread for Poland," *ibid.*, 6 Jan. 1917, also *Rockefeller Foundation Report*, 1915.

[3] The Comité Générale de Secours pour les Victimes de la Guerre en Pologne, which had been formed in Switzerland by Paderewski and Sienkiewicz, shortly afterward asked the British to allow food to be sent into Poland from America. The request was refused on the ground that the Germans were continuing to confiscate Polish products. See *Cmd.* 8348 Misc. No. 32 (1916) *Correspondence Respecting the Relief of Allied Territories in the Occupation of the Enemy*, pp. 4–5.

ing. At the beginning of May the Central Powers had launched their great drive against the Russians with the battle of Gorlice-Tarnow. Overwhelmed by a great concentration of artillery, the Russian lines broke before the Mackensen phalanx, and an even greater disaster was averted only by a general retreat of the Tsar's armies from the Baltic to the Carpathians. The Germans occupied Warsaw on the 1st August, and by the middle of October virtually all of Congress Poland was in the hands of the Teutonic armies. The inevitable destructiveness of military operations of this magnitude was greatly increased by the deliberate policy of devastation carried out by the forces of the Grand Duke Nicholas in their retreat. The destruction of the crops, the confiscation of animals, and the forced migration of part of the population of the eastern districts rendered the agricultural sections unable to support themselves, much less to provide food for the industrial centers of Warsaw, Lodz, and the Dabrowa mining region.

In Congress Poland voluntary committees supported refuges for orphan children and, as far as their resources would permit, operated free soup kitchens for the destitute. Their funds came from private donations, from city administrations, from the Russian Government and Russian societies, and from Polish, Jewish, and other societies abroad. These funds were sufficient for the program, but the program was not enough. Faced with a condition which local resources were entirely inadequate to meet, the Polish Citizens' Relief Committee of Warsaw, with the approval of the German General Staff, appealed to the C.R.B. to make an investigation with a view to undertaking the relief of this territory. Despite the magnitude of the Commission's responsibilities in Belgium and Northern France, and fully aware of the political complications inherent in the Polish problem, Hoover authorized Kellogg to make the requested investigation as a preliminary to negotiations with the belligerents.

Kellogg made his investigation in November and delivered his report early in December. In the meantime Hoover had discussed with German authorities the support they were prepared to give, and on the 22d December he placed the matter before Sir Edward Grey and asked for the approval and co-operation of the Allied Governments in the project.

DOCUMENT NO. 436

Telegram, C.R.B. London to Hoover, *regarding request of Warsaw relief committee for C.R.B. investigation of situation in Poland*

London, 27 October 1915

Relief Commission
New York

Brussels wires:

"Please wire Hoover New York, destitution in Poland approach of winter desperate. Requested by Warsaw Committee and Kessler[4] make personal inspection devastated territory, view possibility organizing provisioning under auspices Commission Relief Belgium. Am making no undertaking. Expect leave October 31 return November 10. Affairs Belgium satisfactory. Poland[5] in charge. German authorities grant permission old clothes into Northern France. Please wire wife Kellogg."

In view of already existing transportation and staff difficulties we believe should not depart from former decision to restrict activities to present sphere. Cable immediately your views regarding reply to Kellogg.

Relief Commission

DOCUMENT NO. 437

Telegram, Hoover to C.R.B. London, *authorizing investigation of Polish relief situation*

New York, 28 October 1915

Relief Commission
London

See no objection Kellogg investigating Poland, and we should lend every help possible to the situation. Could probably get an institution here to take on the administration. However, all would depend upon feasibility arranging approval Allied Governments, covering source of supplies and the securing of transport and finance.

Hoover

DOCUMENT NO. 438

Report, by Kellogg, *on conditions in Poland, based on investigations made in November 1915*

Brussels, November 1915

The districts of Poland occupied by the German Army, which are the only part of Poland that this report concerns, are inhabited by about 7½ million people and include an area of 75,000 square kilome-

[4] Major von Kessler of German General Staff in Northern France.
[5] W. B. Poland.

ters. Three-fifths of the population is rural, depending on agriculture for its living; of the two-fifths in towns, nearly 80 per cent are factory workers and their families. For fifteen months without interruption this country and its people have had to suffer from the enormous hostile activities of two great armies with all the inevitable devastating effects of military operations on a grand scale.

During the great retreat of the Russian Army there was put into effect a military measure that, however well justified and effective it may have been from the military point of view, resulted in an enormous disaster to Poland, and terrible hardships for its population. This was the carefully planned and radically carried out laying waste of a broad zone of the country by burning its villages, destroying its crops and herds, and breaking up its means of transportation and communication.

Four thousand villages were burned and two million people were made houseless. As the houses of the country villages and towns in Poland are almost all built of wood with heavily thatched roofs, they were totally destroyed by the fires, only a heap of ashes and a slender brick chimney with open fireplace in its broader base indicating what was once a villager's cottage. Today, as one travels through the devastated regions, one's eyes are arrested and saddened by the sight of irregular rows along deserted country roads, of these black and bare chimneys standing up stark and staring from the flat Polish plain. These are all that reveal the sites of the one-time comfortable villages of the land.

The Russians attempted to take with them in their retreat the inhabitants of these villages, undoubtedly intending to take care of them in Russia. But the pressure of the German Army was too severe and the Russians had to hurry on eastward without their burden of frightened people. These were pushed right and left into the fields or forests adjoining the roads in order to free these roads for the army and its transport. By the time the German Army had arrived, many of the unfortunate people had gone into the roads again and had begun their slow procession homeward. Again they were pushed aside, this time hiding more deeply in the forests from fear of the strange invaders. With the final passing by of the German Army, the people came out again from their hiding places and began making their slow way westward. These sad processions were mainly composed of old men, women, and children and they were almost all on foot. The people carried with them those few of their belongings that they had clutched up when forced to leave their villages. Some of these fugitives traveled on foot as much as one hundred kilometers east and finally the same one hundred kilometers west.

Returning, as such simple, bewildered people naturally would under such circumstances, to their homes, they found there only ashes and bare chimneys. Some of them, notably the weaker and older, being unable to do anything on the sites of their former homes, betook themselves into the nearest city. Scores of thousands, for example, crowded into Warsaw and became at once a load on the already suffering population there. Others clinging more tenaciously

to "home," began to make rude shelters for themselves by the side of bare chimneys. These shelters are in many cases merely a sort of dugout, with low mud walls and a roof above ground composed of poles, soil, and thatch. Into the single room of this shelter the family crowds to sleep and to protect themselves on days of rain. Their cooking is done outside in the fireplace at the bottom of the standing chimney. I saw on the occasion of my visit to one of these burned villages in the first half of November barefooted women and children trying to boil their potatoes—all their meal—at the outdoor fireplace in the rain and sleet.

In normal times the agricultural produce of the part of Poland occupied by the German Army was not sufficient to meet the needs of the population, the country being, as already noted, nearly two-fifths industrial. The deficient food was mostly supplied from Russia. The war operations lasted through the harvest period of 1915. Not more than one-third of the land lay outside the scope of these operations. As a result the harvest was very meager. Great quantities of standing grain were burned or otherwise destroyed, cattle and pigs were seized or killed, many farm implements were annihilated. In some districts no sowings had been made. Add to this the constant and heavy requisitions made by both armies on all undestroyed grain and animals, and it is very easy to see how it is that the Polish people now find themselves in terrible extremities for food.

To understand thoroughly the whole plight of the country, however, one must take into consideration also the position of the large factories and industries, as a large portion of the inhabitants are factory workmen with their families. In the present German-occupied districts of Poland the number of factory workers is about 750,000, making with their families a total strictly industrial population of 2,000,000. The influence of the war has been, in many ways, more terrible on this part of the people than on the agricultural part. Nearly all the factories and large industries have for various reasons stopped work from the beginning of the war. First among these reasons has been the impossibility of obtaining a supply of raw materials for the factories, as almost all of these materials have to be imported. This is the reason of the stopping of the spinning mills, which represent the chief industry of the country. The second reason is the cutting off of the Russian market, which has always been the chief buyer of Polish exports. This reason especially accounts for the stoppage of the iron mills, which represent the second industry in the country. Third, most of the factories making use of local raw materials have had to stop work because of the interruption of railway traffic and constant requisition by the military authorities. Finally it should be noted that a great many factories were actually destroyed during the fighting and sieges by bombardment or fire.

From as reliable statistics as can yet be collected, it is apparent that only about 20 per cent of the population occupied in industry and agriculture have worked normally during the long war period. Add to this the serious derangement to the occupations of other

classes of the population. Not a single branch of the economic activities of the Polish population but was immediately affected. All trade with Russia was paralyzed at once, and commercial interests of all kinds suffered severely. A large number of representatives of the liberal arts found no sale for their offerings; governmental officers were out of employment, or at least received no salary. In an especially hard position were all those dependent on the Russian Government, as old-age pensioners, families of soldiers, etc., etc. The number of soldier families in Warsaw alone is 35,000, and in the whole of the occupied districts the number reaches 300,000, which means a total of 1,200,000 persons affected. In the same situation are the families of the old-age pensioners, the pensioners themselves being nearly all invalids.

The outcome of all these immediate results of Poland's unfortunate position as the seat of more than a year of war on the grand scale is that the country is stripped of its means of subsistence and the great mass of its people are now either wholly or in part dependent on charity or rapidly approaching this condition. In Warsaw alone, for example, at least one-third of the population is now being aided by local charities. Famine diseases, such as hemeralopia, xerosis conjunctival, ulcus corneae ex inanitione, are becoming prevalent. A special disease of this type, known as hydrops-anasarca ex inanitione, consisting of a swelling of the whole body, degeneration of muscles, weakness of sight and hearing, and general deterioration, has appeared. In the town of Sosnowize alone 110 cases of the disease were noted in six weeks, half of the number being children.

Efforts were being made by the Poles to relieve some of the hunger and suffering. A large Bürger-Komitee was organized in Warsaw very soon after the beginning of the war. This committee is composed of twenty-four leading men of the city with Prince Lubomirski as chairman. Each member is chairman of a special section, or subcommittee, made up of other men not included in the main Bürger-Komitee. Each section has its own special subject of attention, as finance, food, children, women, finding work, the homeless, etc. Contributions of money have been secured from various private sources and some money gifts have been received from America and elsewhere. In addition the Bürger-Komitee has obtained a small credit from a Warsaw bank. On the basis of these gifts and credit, the committee had organized and is carrying on a considerable amount of charitable work. It is maintaining eighty-one soup kitchens and tea houses in which soup or tea and bread are given daily to a large number of people either wholly gratis or against the payment of a few kopeks, this payment being regulated by the ability of the recipient of the charity to pay. Over 100,000 people are receiving food from their soup kitchens and tea houses every day, one-third of whom pay from 5 to 10 kopeks a day. The ration in these soup kitchens is one liter of soup and 200 grams of rye bread daily.

In addition the Bürger-Komitee is helping to maintain a considerable number of refuges for houseless old men and women and for children who have been made orphans or half orphans by the war.

Twenty-five thousand children are now being cared for. Most of these unfortunates are fugitives from the destroyed country villages. The committee also maintains sixty-four special shops scattered over the city where limited amounts of certain food necessaries are sold at reduced prices.

Special Jewish soup kitchens have also been established, mostly on a basis of charity extended by Jewish organizations. One private institution alone, "Esra," maintains twenty-five soup kitchens in which 35,000 people receive soup and bread at the price of four kopeks.

The continuation of war conditions and the isolation of Poland from outside sources of food supply are completely exhausting both the financial resources of private charity and also the actual stocks of food commodities in the country. Prices of what foodstuffs are available have increased by from 200 to 1,500 per cent. The following figures show this situation very clearly:

	Price before the War *(Roubles)*	Present Price *(Roubles)*
Wheat flour, sack	8	50
Sugar, one pud (16⅔ kilos—36 pounds)	4.40	16
Barley grits, one pud	2	12
Peas, one pud	1.50	12
Soap, one pud	4	30
Candles, one pud	10	32
Naptha, one pud	2	30
Bacon, one pud	10	64

But even if the Bürger-Komitee and the other charitable Polish organizations had considerable financial resources, they would be unable to make these resources go far, first because of the high prices of what foodstuffs are available and second because of the actual total exhaustion of certain foodstuffs. There are practically no fat meats or other fats at present available. Also dried vegetables, such as rice, peas, and beans, are practically exhausted. Sugar is almost wanting, and, because of the destruction of cattle, milk is available in only very small quantity. There is great need of condensed milk. Children and the infirm aged are suffering terribly from lack of milk, both for direct consumption as drink and as means of preparing special child's and invalid's foods.

There is a certain limited quantity of flour and a larger supply of potatoes. What foods are available can of course be easily distributed in Warsaw, Lodz, and other cities, but in the country means of distribution are wanting and if it were not for the fact that the potatoes are still scattered in the fields and local regions in which they have been grown, starvation of the people would assume horrible proportions. Thousands of families, including old and infirm men and women, and children of tender age, are maintaining life at present on practically no other food than potatoes. Potatoes alone, in

whatever quantity available, without fats and proteins, cannot long support life, especially in a cold country and among people subject to exposure. The weak, of course, go first: the children, the aged, and the sick. Then the strong become weak and the new-weak succumb.

Besides the lack of food, the lack of footwear and bed-covering is becoming very serious. I saw barefooted children in November, even in the charitable refuges in Warsaw where the greatest efforts are being exerted to care for these little unfortunates; the committee in charge simply could not provide the necessary shoes and stockings.

The Poles need charity: that is, actual gifts of food, clothing, and money. Materials are more valuable to them than money because of the actual inability to buy any longer certain necessaries in Poland, and because of the enormous prices of the few available commodities. But more than the charity of actual gifts are needed the permission and the means of importing food and clothing from the outside world. The Poles ask the world for this rather than for money. They can manage to establish foreign credit to a certain extent, if only they can be given opportunity to buy commodities abroad with this credit and to bring them into Poland. They ask, in a word, for exactly the kind of assistance that the Commission for Relief in Belgium is now giving Belgium and the North of France.

That is the reason they address specifically to the Commission what is really a petition to the world.

DOCUMENT NO. 439

Memorandum, by Hoover, *of meeting with Major von Kessler, representing the German General Staff, and others, relative to relief in Poland*

Brussels, 2 December 1915

On December 2, I had a meeting with Major von Kessler, representing the German General Staff, together with Messrs. Kellogg, Poland, Count Wengersky, and Captain Uhl, for discussion of Polish relief.[6]

I stated that the attitude of the Allied Governments would undoubtedly be based on a number of considerations.

First of all would be that the native foodstuffs of Poland at present existent in the country, and a quantity equivalent to any which had been absorbed by the German Army, would need to be made available for the Polish population. Major von Kessler stated that practically no food of any consequence had been taken out of German Poland and there was no difficulty over the restriction of the native food to the population.

I stated that the second and most difficult problem would be one of finance, and it was obvious that charity was no longer available

[6] Hoover took the opportunity of this meeting with the military authorities to mention the unsatisfactory treatment of the Commission by the German administration in Belgium. See chapter ii, Documents 44 and 45.

for these large food schemes; that some form of substantial regular income must be set up for the Commission, and I asked Major von Kessler if it would be feasible to formulate some kind of obligation on the primary governments and municipalities in Poland, to be taken up by the Reichsbank and interpreted to us in the form of foreign exchange to the amount of 20,000,000 francs per month. He stated that he would take the matter up and represent strongly the necessity of some such arrangement as this.

I then represented to him that the present attitude of the Allied Governments toward foodstuffs going into these occupied populations was such that I believed if we wished for success it would be necessary for me to be able to put the matter up as a sort of co-operation of the Germans and the Allies through us and that the Germans would have to be prepared to find in Germany a certain amount of foodstuffs, and I understood they had an excess of potatoes, sugar, and salt, and could furnish some cereals. In these circumstances the question could be confined to oversea imports, fats, condensed milk, and high protein producing foodstuffs. He stated that the situation was so acute that something of this kind might be accomplished and that, in any event, we should find the Germans prepared for the fullest co-operation of which they were capable in their present physical condition.

He stated that Germany was short 15 to 20 per cent of her usual food supplies, but that this reduction was no disaster to the population and of no military value to the Allies, but no further reduction could be allowed to the population by way of sacrifice of food supplies to the kindred of the Allies, and he advanced the usual German view that if the Allies wished to impose a blockade on their own kindred the responsibility for the consequences must be with the Allies.

I then said that, of course, the Commission for Relief would require facilities for organization and it seemed to me our results of general work with German officers in Northern France had been so admirable that we should want to follow that type of organization. Major von Kessler stated there would be no difficulty whatever on this point.

I stated that shipping would be a prime difficulty even if all the other stumbling blocks were overcome and that we should certainly have to depend on the Germans for shipping across the Baltic and probably for oversea shipping, if the Allies would consent to our use of German ships. Major von Kessler stated that shipping across the Baltic could be arranged provided the Allies would agree not to submarine the ships carrying relief. As to oversea shipping, that question could only be settled by us with the Allied Governments.[7] I informed Major von Kessler that in all these questions which embraced the rights and wrongs of the civil population it was necessary

[7] Documents 207 to 213, chapter v, describe Hoover's negotiations for German ships for the C.R.B. The French Government delayed giving its consent, and finally the Germans refused.

to have wide ventilation of the question in all neutral countries in order that public opinion might be formulated which might impress the governments on both sides and tend to bring them to a solution, and I thought it would be desirable that such public opinion were created. I represented to him what had been the results for Belgium on both sides and he agreed with me that it was not only admirable but necessary.

DOCUMENT NO. 440

Petition,[8] *by* CITIZENS OF WARSAW TO THE C.R.B., *asking for extension of its operations to Poland*

WARSAW, 3 December 1915

To the Commission for Relief in Belgium

SIRS:

The saving action undertaken on such a large scale by the American social corporations in Belgium expressed itself in the organizing by the Commission for Relief in Belgium of food supply for many millions of inhabitants of Belgium and partly of France.

From the very beginning of the war Poland found itself in a peculiarly difficult situation. During fifteen months without interruption this country has had to suffer from the enormous hostile activities of the two armies, which devastated it far more than Belgium, where the war operations lasted only a couple of months.

We state hereby in a general outline the extent of the disaster which has fallen on the Polish land, the actual state of penury of the inhabitants, and take the liberty to suggest some of the means which could be undertaken to improve at least partly the critical situation. Knowing the noble feelings which ruled the American nation in their so generous help in Belgium, we dare hope, Sirs, that you will not refuse to support our petition.

Area and number of inhabitants

The districts of the Kingdom of Poland occupied by the German Army, are inhabited by about one-third of the total population of Poland and reach an area of 73,120 square kilometers. The population amounts to 7,596,000, of which the rural districts have 4,690,000 inhabitants and the town districts 2,906,000; Warsaw, 1,000,000; Lodz, 644,000.

The occupation of the inhabitants

As we see, from the above, three-fifths of the population is rural—and therefore agriculture is their chief way of earning their daily

[8] The version given appears to be the final form altered to conform to the German as well as the Polish ideas.

bread. The population of the towns, on account of the comparatively weakly developed commerce in this country and owing to a certain concentration of factories in towns, consists chiefly of factory workers—about 80 per cent.

The normal food supply

In normal times the agricultural produce of the part of Poland occupied by the German Army was scarcely sufficient to cover the demand, the country being to a certain amount industrial. The deficient food was supplied from Russia.

The influence of the war on the agricultural production

The war operations had an ill influence on the harvests of 1914 and 1915. Only a small part of the land—about one-third—was not affected by the crisis. A large percentage of the estates and farms have been either totally or partially ruined; great quantities of grain were burned during the fires, these being the result of the battles and fights which were going on. A perhaps greater catastrophe was the destruction of large quantities of standing corn, in the northern and eastern districts of the country, during the last retreat of the Russian Army, as this retreat took place in the months of July and August with the result that no harvest was possible. We must also draw attention to the fact that owing to the military operations large quantities of farm stock were requisitioned or destroyed, also a great number of agricultural estates, with the result of decrease of production. For these reasons no sowing took place in certain districts of the country, either this year or last. Owing to the lack of accurate figures and statistics, we cannot give a precise calculation of the actual decrease of the agricultural production. From the above we come to the conclusion that this year's production has been greatly reduced.

Influence of the war on industry

To understand thoroughly the plight of the country we must take into consideration the position of the large factories and industries, as a large portion of the inhabitants of this country are factory workmen. In the occupied districts of Poland the number of factory workers is about 750,000, which amounts to about two million with the families. Their prosperity depends only on the possibility of these factories being active. The influence of war on this part of social life has been even more terrible than on agriculture.

Nearly all the factories and larger industries stopped work from the beginning of the war for the following reasons:

1. Impossibility to supply the raw materials to the factories, as they were imported from abroad in normal times. This consideration stopped all work in the spinning mills, which occupy the first place in this country.

2. Owing to the cutting off of the Russian market, which was always the chief buyer of Polish export, a lot of factories had to be

stopped, especially the iron works, which occupied the second place in the production of this country.

3. Of the other factories, which employed the local raw materials, and which found buyers in the country itself, only a small number were capable of continuing their work, and this owing to the stoppage of the railways, their occupation by the military authorities, also total destruction of a large number of factories which were situated on the actual fighting line. Handcraft and trade suffered to a less extent than industry, yet for the same above-mentioned reasons and especially owing to the lack of raw materials, only a small number of workshops were active during the war. From statistics, which we were able to gather, we may come to the conclusion that only about 20 per cent of the population occupied in trade, industry, or agriculture worked normally during the war period.

Other classes of inhabitants

Revising the position of the other classes of the population, we can specify that the economic shock of the war was so great that not a single branch of social life was spared, and everybody suffered to a larger or smaller extent. As soon as the means of communication with the West were stopped, all the transit commerce with Russia was paralyzed. A large number of representatives of the liberal arts, also of civil servants, could not earn anything owing to the changed conditions. In an especially disastrous position, after the retreat of the Russian Army, were those who were dependent on the Russian Government, and were left behind. In this class we must especially draw attention to the families of the soldiers, also of the old-age pensioners.

The numbers of soldiers' families in Warsaw alone is 35,000 and in the totality of the districts occupied by the German Army attains 300,000—which means a total of 1,200,000 affected.

The state of the population

The result of this situation of the country has naturally had a disastrous effect on the condition of its inhabitants.

The number of persons dependent in Lodz alone on public philanthropy is 70,000, and in the whole country, several hundred thousand.

According to the opinion of the competent German authorities, the quantities of flour, meat, and sugar still found in the country may suffice for the first needs. An adequate supply of potatoes and salt has been promised, as well as assurance given not to requisition any of the above articles.

Products which are most needed in the country

But, as it is clearly seen from the above, the quantities of products existing now in the country cannot satisfy the needs of the population, and this compels us to request most earnestly the Commission for Relief in Belgium to allow the free import through its channels to Poland of food products, especially of rice, peas, beans, etc., and also of bacon and fats.

Remitting this most earnest petition to the Commission we dare assert, Sirs, that thanks and blessings of millions of human beings will accompany your noble efforts to bring them assistance.

(Signed)

The Catholic Archbishop of Warsaw
His Excellency, the Most Rev. Aleksander Kakowski

The Mayor and Aldermen of the City Council:
Prince Zdzislaw Lubomirski
Mr. Piotr Drzewiecki
Mr. Edward Geisler
Count Wladyslaw Potocki

The President and Members of the Polish Relief Organizations:
Mr. Zygmunt Chrzanowski
Count Adam Ronikier
Mr. Antoni Wieniaski

The President of the Jewish Congregation in Warsaw:
Mr. Michal Bergson

The President of the Protestant Evangelical Congregation of Warsaw:
The Rev. Juljan Macheejd

The Presidents of the Industrial Society:
Prince Zdzislaw Lubomirski
Mr. Andrzej Wierzbicki

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 441

Letter, Dr. E. H. Lewinski-Corwin to Hoover, *quoting resolutions of the American Polish Relief Committee of New York, asking the assistance of the C.R.B. in Poland*

New York, 3 December 1915

Mr. Herbert C. Hoover, President
The Commission for Relief in Belgium, London

Dear Mr. Hoover:

At the last regularly convened meeting of the full Committee, the following Resolution was unanimously adopted:

Whereas the needs of the civil population of Poland are known to be intense; and

Whereas the existing relief committees outside of Poland cannot afford help in a sufficiently large measure

THEREFORE *Be It Resolved* that this Committee urge upon the Commission for the Relief of Belgium to take steps for relieving the starving population of Poland as early as possible; and be it

Further Resolved that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the President, the Secretary, and the Director of the Commission for the Relief of Belgium.

In sending this may I add a personal word to the effect that present conditions in Poland are most harassing and that unless immediate relief is sent, tens of thousands of people will die of starvation and cold. It is the firm conviction of all those who know the situation that only a Commission like yours can do effective work, as the supplies which you could send would be immune from requisition by the German Government; and that American agents will be absolutely impartial in the distribution of relief.

I am closing with the hope that your Commission will see the way clear to start their beneficent activities at once.

With sincere regards, I am,

Very truly yours

(Signed) E. H. LEWINSKI-CORWIN
Secretary

DOCUMENT NO. 442

Letter, HOOVER TO GREY, *proposing relief to Poland*

LONDON, 22 December 1915

SIR EDWARD GREY
Foreign Office, London

SIR:

Knowing your keen desire to mitigate in every possible way the human suffering arising out of the war, I feel justified in bringing before you a suggestion on behalf of the civil population in Poland.

I attach hereto a petition which this Commission has received from the large representative relief committee in Warsaw, and also the report made as the result of personal investigation at our instance by Dr. Vernon Kellogg, until lately Director in Belgium of our work there.

No added words of mine can darken the picture of misery and despair which these statements depict, representing as they do what would have been the state of Belgium but for the relief afforded under international auspices, with your earnest support.

I have had some informal conversation with German authorities, who assured me that there are cereals and potatoes available in Poland and elsewhere, from which, by mobilization and organized distribution, some sort of minimum ration can be provided. The other items of dietary do not exist in Poland and they are critically necessary to preserve health to the strong, life to the weak, and to forefend from the whole population already incipient famine dis-

eases. The shortage of these particular commodities in Germany leaves no hope of help to Poland from that quarter.

I am assured by these German authorities, that protection will be afforded to local and imported supplies for the exclusive use of the civil population, also that every facility will be afforded to this Commission in its task of organization and distribution under proper guarantees. It appears to us that the deficient fats, beans, etc., together with condensed milk for children, can only be obtained by imports from overseas, for which there would seem to be a route practicable from the Western Hemisphere to Sweden, with transshipment thence via Danzig or Libau. We could not undertake such a task without the approval and co-operation of the Allied Governments. In the provision of food supply for these people we should need, not only to rely on charity, but to assemble all the economic resources of Poland and its institutions, in much the same manner as has been done in Belgium, and we should need the permission of His Majesty's Government to facilitate exchange and banking operations.

The painful gravity of the situation in Poland cannot be gainsaid, nor need I apologize for the interest this organization has taken in the Polish people, in addition to our other very grave responsibilities. We have no desire to add to our burdens, but if the fourteen months of service in Belgium have commended us to the various belligerent governments, it is our duty to use the confidence thus acquired on behalf of the Polish people; and I wish to add that if the Allied Governments are prepared to assent to such relief measures, and if any other institution can be summoned to undertake their execution, this Commission would be glad to give any advice arising out of its experience or, alternatively, we should be glad to incorporate such other body in any organization we might set up.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Yours very faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER, *Chairman*

2. *The Commission's Negotiations with the British and German Governments. January–August 1916*

A month elapsed before Hoover received a reply from the Foreign Office. In the meantime the Poles and their friends in America endeavored to bring the pressure of public opinion to bear on the British to relax the blockade to the extent of allowing the Commission to import relief supplies. Without definitely refusing to consider the relief project, the British Government did not encourage it, maintaining that the Central Powers by confiscation and export of native Polish supplies were wholly responsible for the present condition of Poland.

In the public controversy which continued for the rest of the year the question of Polish relief became more and more a weapon with which the belligerents attacked each other on the battlefield of propaganda. The Germans declared that the inhuman and illegal blockade of the Allies was responsible for the sufferings of the Poles, and the Allies replied that the inhuman and illegal policies of the Germans, their exploitation of the resources of conquered territories, made relief futile. In his official reply to Hoover, Sir Edward Grey did not close the door on further negotiations, but he demanded a guarantee from the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments[9] not to export native Polish products or use them for the occupying armies before the Allies would make any arrangement with the Commission for relief.

DOCUMENT NO. 443

Telegram, Polish Organizations in the United States to H. H. Asquith, British Prime Minister, *requesting sanction of British Government for Polish relief through the C.R.B.*

Chicago, 9 January 1916

To His Excellency
H. Asquith, Prime Minister
Downing St., London

The Undersigned duly elected officers of legally constituted organizations numbering half a million American citizens, representatives of 4,000,000 Polish-speaking residents of the United States, hereby most respectfully present a unanimous request to His Majesty's Government that the blockade against ships carrying provisions and clothing consigned from the United States and destined for the war-stricken districts in Poland, be raised, and vessels carrying such cargo be permitted to disembark at the harbor of Danzig or some other suitable port for distribution among inhabitants of that part of Poland devastated by war. We base this request upon the broadest demands of humanity. The terrors of war visited upon the innocent peaceful population of Poland have been augmented by famine, pestilence, and death; one-third of a generation, the youngest, has practically ceased to exist; the remaining youth, old men, and women

[9] The Austro-Hungarian Government was brought into these discussions because the eastern districts of Russian Poland were administered from Lublin by the Dual Monarchy. The Germans controlled the western districts which were under a general government set up in Warsaw. Berlin and Vienna could not agree on a solution of the Polish problem, and the maintenance of this dual administration created further complications in the Commission's relief negotiations.

are now upon the threshold of actual extinction by starvation, disease, and exposure. The world cannot countenance the extermination of an entire nation in such excruciating agony. The ways of diplomatic discourse are too slow in the presence of such calamity: death would win the race. We believe action must begin at once. In this honest belief we appeal most respectfully to the sense of justice and humanity of the great British nation. Out of the stricken district forming historical Poland two and a half million men have been called to fight for the Allies' cause. Over twelve hundred thousand soldiers of purest Polish blood have been killed or wounded, and now their families are without food or shelter, suffering far more than any other victims of the war. As the situation there is identical with that of Belgium, the country being almost entirely in the hands of the Central Powers, we earnestly hope and believe that the English Government's magnanimity and Your Excellency's wisdom and generosity will accede to our most urgent appeal. We are prepared to furnish food and clothing for our stricken brethren in Poland, and earnestly request that we be permitted to render our kin in Poland immediate assistance. It is our desire and earnest hope that the American Commission for Belgium should take charge of the entire relief work, thus offering to His Majesty's Government complete and absolute guarantee that food and clothing will be distributed only and exclusively among Polish sufferers in districts devastated by war. Now the very life of the people of Poland depends solely upon Great Britain permitting us to send food. We trust that the Almighty will inspire His Majesty's Government to grant our request. Anxiously awaiting a favorable reply, we beg to remain Your Excellency's most obedient servants:

The Polish National Alliance (*President,* K. Zychlinski; *Secretary,* J. S. Zawilinski)

Polish Roman Catholic Union (Peter Rostenkowski, *President;* J. S. Konopa, *Secretary*)

Polish Women's Alliance (*President,* Anna Neumann; *Secretary,* Emily Napieralska)

Polish Falcons Alliance (*President,* Dr. Starzynski; *Secretary,* T. Samulski)

Polish Alma Mater (*President,* Julian J. Nejman; *Secretary,* M. Brochocki)

Polish Union of America (*President,* Dr. R. Tenerowicz; *Secretary,* Jacob Dembiec)

Polish National Council (*President,* S. Adamkiewicz; *Secretary,* M. Medwecki)

Polish Uniformed Societies (*President,* F. R. Porzuczek; *Chancellor,* A. Czechowicz)

Polish Central Relief Committee (*President,* T.M. Helinski; *Secretary,* S. Osada)

St. Joseph's Polish Union (*President,* T. Polasinski; *Secretary,* A. Kazierski)

DOCUMENT NO. 444

Telegram, Asquith to K. Zychlinski, Polish National Alliance, Chicago, *replying to the preceding and placing responsibility for situation in Poland on Germany*[10]

London, 14 January 1916

Mr. K. Zychlinski
Polish National Alliance, Chicago

I have read with interest the telegram representing the views of the Polish organisations in the United States. His Majesty's Government are earnestly considering the question of Polish relief in consultation with the French Government, but they are faced with accumulating evidence that not only is the present shortage of the necessaries of life in Poland due to the systematic confiscation and export of native stocks by the occupying armies, but also, notwithstanding the deplorable condition of the country today, this process of spoliation still continues. The past history of this process was summarised in a report by a leading member of the Polish Independence Party published in our own press last November, and evidence of the continuance of these confiscations appears daily in the Austrian press. Four thousand five hundred wagon loads of potatoes were to be sent from Lublin to Vienna last October, and a decree of December 23rd regulates the importation from Poland into Austria of cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, eggs, meat, tallow, milk, and many other articles. On November 12th the Vienna press announced the arrival of large shipments of geese from Poland. It is impossible to resist the conclusion that the stoppage of such exports and the replacement by Germany and Austria of the stocks seized in the past would remove the danger of starvation and that little if any importation from overseas is necessary. The first step to be taken in the interests of Poland is the establishment of an organisation on the spot to control all remaining stocks and to obtain from the German and Austrian Governments the guarantee of a daily ration to the population equivalent to the foodstuffs seized in the past. In view of what has happened in Belgium where the Germans have used every effort to remove all resources of the country not covered by specific guarantees, it is certain that any permission to import from overseas before these steps have been taken would only stimulate the requisitions of the enemy by giving him the assurance of supplies to replace what he takes.

Please accept my assurance of the deep sympathy of His Majesty's Government.

(Signed) H. H. Asquith

[10] For further correspondence between Premier Asquith and Polish organizations in the United States see *Cmd.* 8348 Miscellaneous No. 32 (1916), *Relief of Allied Territories in the Occupation of the Enemy,* Annexes 4, 5, and 6.

DOCUMENT NO. 445

Letter, GREY TO HOOVER, *stating guarantees demanded from Germans prior to discussion of importation into Poland by C.R.B.*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
5 February 1916

DEAR MR. HOOVER:

I have carefully considered your letter of December 22nd, regarding the proposed scheme for the relief of Poland.

In face of the accumulating evidence of German and Austrian requisitions in Poland, some mention of which you will find in the enclosed telegraphic correspondence with Polish organisations in the United States, I fear it would be impossible to enter into any arrangement with you in regard to any scheme of relief until the German and Austrian Governments have prohibited the export of all foodstuffs from Russian Poland and have guaranteed that native stocks of foodstuffs shall not be drawn upon to maintain the occupying armies.

If and when this is done, it might be possible to come to an arrangement with you to allow the importation of certain articles into Poland in return for undertakings on the part of the German and Austrian Governments to supply an adequate ration of other necessary articles and to give you a free hand in the distribution of all stocks of foodstuffs thus made available. But the prohibition of export and the guarantee mentioned above must be regarded as conditions precedent to any further discussion, since these measures are demanded by the situation now existing, quite independently of the question of imports, and the fact that they have not yet been put into force constitutes evidence that the German and Austrian Governments will never co-operate in any work undertaken in the interests of the population of Poland.

Yours very truly

(Signed) E. GREY

Hoover immediately took advantage of the slight encouragement contained in Sir Edward Grey's letter. He asked Ambassador Gerard to get, if possible, the required undertakings from the Berlin authorities, while he continued to press the British Government for favorable consideration of the plan, utilizing recent reports of Polish conditions made by Caspar Whitney of the C.R.B. and F. C. Walcott of the Rockefeller Commission.[11] Finally Hoover drafted a memo-

[11] Members of the Rockefeller Foundation War Relief Commission, notably Mr. Walcott, Mr. Henry James, Jr., and Col. Warwick Greene, cooperated with Mr. Hoover in these negotiations. *Rockefeller Foundation Report,* 1916.

randum containing specific proposals for Polish relief. This he submitted to the British Foreign Office, the Russian Ambassador at London, and the German Government through Ambassador Gerard. The Hoover plan contemplated the provisioning of Poland only to the 1st October 1916, for Russian Poland, unlike Belgium, is predominantly agricultural and it was therefore assumed that after the harvest there would be sufficient local supplies to furnish an adequate ration for both rural and urban population.

DOCUMENT NO. 446

Letter, HOOVER TO GERARD, *requesting that he take up the Polish relief question with the German Government*

LONDON, 7 February 1916

His Excellency, the Hon. James Gerard,
American Ambassador, Berlin

DEAR MR. GERARD:

As you are aware, we have been since early last December trying to see if something could not be done with the Allied Governments to open a hole in the blockade for Polish relief. In this matter we have been unceasing in our importunities here and have been backed up by the various Polish associations throughout the world. These associations in the United States have been called into general convention and other means taken to ventilate the whole question.

You will also recollect that I wrote you some time since that we had had some unofficial approaches from members of the German General Staff,[12] and, as you are aware, we sent Dr. Kellogg to Poland and subsequently, in order to keep the matter alive, I asked Mr Whitney and Mr. Walcott to make reports. You will please find enclosed four documents:

1. A letter addressed by me to Sir Edward Grey on December 22nd.
2. A telegram sent by the United Polish Committees in the United States to Mr. Asquith.
3. Mr. Asquith's reply, and
4. Sir Edward's reply to me on February 5th.

This last document is the one of importance and, although it does not at first sight appear to go very far, and is written in the usual phraseology of combatants, I can assure you that there are really possibilities in it, for it contains some considerable, although qualified, promise. It is impossible to guarantee anything in these times of unprecedented heat, but I feel convinced that the more humane section of the English Government wishes to see something done for Poland.

[12] See Document 439.

On the other hand, these men have their own difficulties with their own associates and their own people. The two preliminary points set out by Sir Edward Grey, the prohibition of exports from either Austrian or German Poland[13] and undertaking that the native stocks should not be drawn upon, do not seem to me to be an insuperable thing to accomplish, and I have the feeling that if the Central Governments would do this and if they would go further and allow the export from Germany of certain amounts of cereals, potatoes, sugar, and salt, we could open a gate of importation from abroad via Stockholm and Danzig for at least a similar value of foodstuff. In any event, it will probably occur to you that a counter offer of this kind from the Central Governments would put them right in public opinion.

I understand that, in view of the pressure of publicity which has been given to the Polish question and the fact that their blockade carries with it some responsibility in the matter, the British Foreign Office has, this morning, sent the entire correspondence to the press. Knowing perfectly well your keenness on behalf of the Polish people and the efforts you have made at different times to ameliorate the situation, I have the feeling that perhaps you will be willing to again make a further attempt in the matter, for there is really, in this dispatch, some foundation for a negotiation. The matter has now got beyond everything we can do as simple, unofficial persons, and I feel that if you are able to develop something with the German Government, Mr. Page at this end would be able to advance it another step on this side. In any event, the matter is now in your hands and I await your advice and judgment as to what can be done.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) Herbert C. Hoover, *Chairman*

DOCUMENT NO. 447

Guarantees respecting relief proposed by the German General Government at Warsaw

[Brussels], 11 February 1916

Agreement

In the event that the Commission for Relief in Belgium shall be able to assist in the ravitaillement of Poland, the following principles are agreed to by the German Government.

1. The Americans have the right of control in exact agreement with the convention arranged for the North of France and/or Belgium.

2. The German Authorities pledge themselves that all the food supplies introduced by the Americans shall be applied exclusively to the use of the civil population and distributed according to the

[13] The reference is to the parts of Russian Poland under German and Austro-Hungarian administration, not to the pre-war Polish possessions of Austria (i.e., Galicia) or of Germany (i.e., Posen and West Prussia).

methods now obtaining in North of France and/or Belgium. The distribution is to be made through the Polish Local Committees under the supervision of the American Representatives or Delegates and the German Relief Officer for the civil population.

3. The German Authorities guarantee that all food supplies originating in Poland shall be used exclusively for the civil population and the constabulary. Excepted from the above are surplus potatoes left after the needs of the civil population and constabulary have been completely covered. The constabulary is required to pay cash marks or equivalent for whatever foodstuffs they purchase or requisition at a fair market price. The allowance of potatoes per capita per day for the population in determining this surplus is to be at least four hundred grams per day.

4. The German Authorities guarantee that the transportation of the imported American food supplies destined for the General Government of Poland, the Etapp of Biala, and the Government of Wilna shall be shipped from Danzig to the German frontier at one-half rate and without charge from the German-Polish frontier to its destination in Poland or the Etapp.

The above guarantees are given by the General Government of Poland,

THE GOVERNMENT OF WILNA
THE GOVERNMENT OF BIALA ETAPP

OBERLEUTNANT SCHALL

Witness: F. C. WALCOTT

DOCUMENT NO. 448

Note on conditions of industry in the Kingdom of Poland under German occupation

WARSAW, January 1916

There are three principal industrial centers in Poland, namely; Lodz, with about 300,000 workmen, Warsaw with about 250,000, and the Dabrowa mining district with Czestochowa—about 200,000; of these 750,000 men and women, about 350,000 worked in the large factories, 400,000 in the smaller ones and at home. With an average family of three for every workingman, it means over two million people now almost entirely destitute.

The sudden outbreak of war brought the Polish industry to a complete standstill; but shortly afterwards the offices of the Warsaw Branch of the State Bank being reopened and a certain amount of goods traffic being re-established, our factories reopened to work. Some branches of the industry such as metallurgic and tanning works, having on books orders of the Russian military authorities, and enjoying on this account certain facilities, have even increased their normal production.

Generally speaking, our industry has shown a great ability to adapt itself to the changed conditions of production during the war

and, successfully overcoming a lack of fuel and great difficulties in traffic, employed in December 1914 in Warsaw 55 per cent of the normal number of workmen, which figure, constantly increasing, reached in July 1915, 75 per cent of the normal employment.

In Czestochowa, which the German Army occupied at the beginning of the war, and in Lodz, occupied with a short interval since the beginning of October 1914, the industry came to a complete standstill. Exceptionally only, and for short periods, have single factories in order to assist their workmen, employed for a few days a week certain classes of them.

The whole industry of the Dabrowa district is nearly out of work, with the exception of coal mines, which reopened their activity after having set in a working condition their traction plants, which the German Army had destroyed in November 1914.

Upon the occupation of Warsaw and of the rest of Poland by the German Army, similar conditions, as mentioned above for Lodz and the Dabrowa district, began to extend over the whole industry.

In the first place, we must mention, that a certain number of large factories have been destroyed by the retreating Russian Army; others have been transported to Russia. Specially metallurgy suffered herefrom, particularly factories having orders for the Russian Government, the chemical branch, and many others, such as the probably greatest in Europe for the textile industry, the textile manufacture of Zyrardow.

The remaining factories have lost the possibility of selling their articles to Russia, which for many branches of industry has been the principle outlet, as well as to Lithuania and to the country, because of interruption and difficulties of goods, and passenger traffic, and postal communication. It should not be forgotten that permissions for travel are subject to certain difficulties.

On the other hand, the industry remained quite without any supply of raw materials and coal. The supply of coal especially remained until the end of 1915 much below the indispensable private needs of the population, charity and municipal institutions, not to mention industry.

The stocks of raw materials, which at the time of the occupation of Warsaw were at factories and stores, have been sequestered by the German authorities.

In the Dabrowa districts, Czestochowa and Lodz, enormous quantities of raw materials and unfinished products have been sequestered and carried away. Up to the present it is not known at what prices and at what time the payment will be made. In Warsaw, on the contrary, all sequestered goods are bought by a special "Society for purchase of war raw materials" at theoretical prices fixed in free contracts. In fact, these prices are imposed beforehand and with a heavy loss to the industry. People not willing to sell at these prices are running the risk of having their goods sequestered on the same conditions as in Lodz.

The release of raw materials indispensable for production, even from the stocks of the factory, is granted with difficulties only,

February 5, 1916.

your letter
of
Poland.

In face of the accumulating evidence of
Austrian requisitions in Poland, some
mention of which you will
tions in the United States, I fear it would be
possible to
in regard to any scheme of relief until the
from Russian Poland
upon to maintain the

If

If and when this were done, it might be possible to come to an arrangement with you for allowing the importation of certain articles into Poland in return for undertakings on the part of the German and Austrian Governments to supply an adequate ration of other necessary articles and to give you a free hand in the distribution of all stocks of foodstuffs thus made available. But the prohibition of export and the guarantee mentioned above must be regarded as conditions precedent to any further discussion, since these measures are demanded by the situation now existing, quite independently of the question of imports, and the fact that they have not yet been put into force
undertaken in the interests of the population of
Poland.

Yours very truly,
E. Grey.

Letter, 5 February 1916, Sir Edward Grey to Hoover

and in quantities not sufficient; in some cases the German authorities have based their refusal of release of raw materials upon the fact that the factory would employ workmen, such specially trained as are lacking in Germany (metal-branch). It has been forbidden to manufacturers in Lodz to give any help to the men, even to their women and children, as long as the workmen belonging to the family and able to work, have not given their consent to go to work in Germany.

The policy of the occupying authorities can be summed up as follows: all raw materials and unfinished products from Poland must be used up by the German industry; the live power of the factories, their workmen, must be transported to Germany.

As our workmen are unwilling to go to Germany, they must be compelled to by misery at home, through full stoppage of all work. All articles in the Polish press regarding this question are systematically crossed by the censor.

The Association of Manufacturers has in reply to a memorial handed on the 21st September 1915 to the Governor-General received an answer, the conclusion of which runs as follows:

"In conclusion the Governor General is of the opinion that it is wrong and injurious to industry to endeavor to bring it into activity during the war and before the re-establishment of free commerce and traffic and before the demand for articles is forthcoming. He is rather of the opinion that the re-establishment of an industrial life should be left to the development of general conditions of the war, political and economic, and that no interference of the authorities should at present take place."

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 449

Memorandum,[14] *by* Hoover, *proposing the basis on which relief to Poland could be undertaken*

London, 21 February 1916

There are approximately 15,000,000 people in the German occupied eastern area, including Russian Poland and Western Russia. Of this population between 3,500,000, and 4,000,000 people are concentrated in, or in the immediate neighborhood of the cities of Warsaw, Lodz, Tchenstochova [Czestochowa], Vilna, Kovno, and Biała Etappe.

In order to handle the problem of provisioning from a practical point of view and at the same time with proper safeguard to all the international phases of the matter, the following basis is proposed:

1. The American Commission shall undertake the revictualling of the above-mentioned cities only.

[14] This memorandum was handed to Sir Edward Grey on the 21st February 1916.

The German Government to undertake to furnish to the cities above mentioned a supply which will cover a ration of 400 grams of potatoes per diem per capita, 10 grams of salt per diem per capita, 10 grams of sugar per diem per capita, and 3 grams of tea per diem per capita.

The American Commission to import cereals to an amount which will afford a ration of 340 grams per diem per capita of wheat, or beans, peas, rice, maize, also, with 40 grams of fats per diem per capita, and a moderate amount of condensed milk for children.

2. That the German Government shall undertake to revictual the whole of the balance of the population in the occupied territory.

3. The German Government will undertake to devise financial means for the provision of gold exchange abroad to pay for the foodstuffs purchased by the American Commission. The Allies to give necessary permits for these financial operations by the Commission.

4. The German Government will make the necessary arrangements to turn over to the Commission sufficient German shipping to do the entire transportation from North America or other places to Danzig.

5. The revictualling to last only until October 1, at which time the new harvest will take care of the entire civilian population.

6. The German Government to undertake that there shall be no interference with the imported foodstuffs; that they shall be consumed absolutely by the native civilian population; that the American Commission will be furnished every facility for the control of the entire revictualling of the cities in question, including the German contribution to the ration.

7. In order to carry out the above it will be necessary to import approximately 40,000 tons of foodstuffs per month. It is proposed that such portion of these foodstuffs as goes to the well-to-do population should be sold, and in this particular the German Government is prepared to give free railway transport over the occupied areas and one-half railway rates over the German State Railroads. It is proposed to provision the destitute without cost.

DOCUMENT NO. 450

Paraphrase of a telegram, LANSING TO PAGE, *regarding the interest in America in Polish relief*

WASHINGTON, 26 February 1916

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, LONDON

There is here a strong feeling of sympathy for the destitute of Poland and a demand which is increasing that relief should be sent to them. The Department advises to all inquiries that Hoover is endeavoring now to obtain the necessary permission to extend over Poland organization of the Belgian Relief Commission. Advise Sir Edward Grey, if you see no objection, of the anxiety of large num-

bers of American citizens and of their wishes to send assistance to Poland. Refer to Department's 2926 of the 23d and request Hoover to make prompt reply.

LANSING

DOCUMENT NO. 451

Letter, HOOVER TO GERARD, *concerning the proposal for Polish relief presented to the British Government*

LONDON, 24 February 1916

His Excellency, the Hon. James Gerard
American Ambassador, Berlin

DEAR MR. GERARD:

POLISH RELIEF

I always approach this practically hopeless subject with feelings of depression. Mr. Walcott has arrived here and we have both been extremely active in English Government circles, endeavoring to get something done. It seems almost hopeless, but we do not intend to give up as long as there is an atom of hope.

I enclose herewith a memorandum which we got up by way of basis of discussion with the English Government. Since writing you we decided that it was quite useless to suggest that a preliminary step should be taken by the Germans apropos of Sir Edward Grey's letter, but that we must try to push the English Government to an undertaking that if we could get something in the nature of this memorandum from the Germans they would pledge themselves in advance to accept it.

I hope no one will think that we have displayed any lack of energy in this matter. I have myself interviewed fully fifty people of importance—officials and other personalities—in fact my agitation of the matter has got me into some trouble with regard to Belgian relief, as it is obvious that the blockade wing of the English Government does not want this matter agitated. On the other hand, there are certain members of the Cabinet who are favorable and it seems to me that it wants a decent man to peg away at it with all his abilities.

So far as the question of chairmanship is concerned, I have no desires in the matter. I think it would be fine for you to be chairman and if it is desired that my present body of operators should take the matter in hand I should be delighted to have the title of General Manager or any other, so long as I could be assured of your permanent support.

Our friends in America are also agitating strongly in the whole of this matter, and it is possible that the pressure of American opinion may yet have some effect.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER, *Chairman*

DOCUMENT NO. 452

Letter, Hoover to Count de Benckendorff, *Russian Ambassador at London, requesting that the Polish relief proposal be taken up with the Russian Government*

London, 1 March 1916

His Excellency Count de Benckendorff
Russian Ambassador, London

Your Excellency:

With respect to my call at the request of Ambassador Page, I enclose herewith:

1. Memorandum of plan of organization which we propose for the relief of the population.
2. Recent report by Mr. Walcott of the Rockefeller Foundation.
3. Report by Dr. Kellogg of our staff.
4. Petition which we have received from certain Warsaw committees.

The plan which is enclosed has been informally submitted to Sir Edward Grey and is under consideration at the present moment. You will notice thereby that the method we are proposing involves limiting our relief to urban and refugee population and imposing upon the Germans not only a contribution of actual foodstuffs to these urban populations, but further imposing upon them the entire sustenance of the agricultural population.

Furthermore, it provides that the Germans shall pay the expenses of our imports and furnish ships.

You will realize that, looking at it purely from the point of view of the German interest, they must maintain alive the agricultural population in order that the fields may be planted for the forthcoming harvest, at which time the relief is to absolutely come to an end, i.e., October 1, 1916.

For the Germans to take care of the agricultural population and make a contribution to the foodstuffs that we use for the urban people, it will be absolutely necessary for the Germans to import from Germany large amounts of foodstuffs and thus more than cover the points raised by the Allied Governments as to the abstraction and absorption of the native food supply in Poland.

You are fully aware that the situation is one of the utmost gravity, and that every day is of importance in the maintenance of such vast numbers of human lives. Under the inspiration of your suggestion that you might, if agreeable to Sir Edward Grey, take the matter up by cable with the Russian Government, I hope you will not resent my suggestion that it might be discussed at length with them by cable, instead of awaiting instructions through the post.

I am, Your Excellency

Yours faithfully

(Signed) Herbert Hoover, *Chairman*

The British reply to Hoover's memorandum of the 21st February was finally delivered on the 10th May. The Allies accepted the proposal in principle, but with certain conditions, the most important of which were that Austria-Hungary make the same commitments as Germany in respect to Polish relief and further that the Governments of Germany and the Dual Monarchy make similar guarantees in respect to Serbia,[15] Albania, and Montenegro, which had been conquered by the armies of the Central Powers in the last months of 1915 and in January and February 1916. Either of these conditions was probably sufficient to wreck the relief project, and at best they meant long and difficult negotiations. The present negotiations had moved so slowly that it was no longer possible, as originally planned, to bring food from America to Poland on German ships. Hoover, therefore, proposed to ask the Swedish Government to permit the export of supplies for the immediate relief of Poland. The Foreign Office vetoed this scheme, being unwilling, apparently, to give Sweden any further cause to ask for an increase in imports through the British blockade.

As had been anticipated, the Germans refused to accept the British conditions with regard to that part of Poland under Austrian administration, and with regard to Serbia, Albania, and Montenegro. Gerard, however, made a counter proposal, to which the Germans were agreeable. This counter proposal was promptly rejected by the Foreign Office, which still insisted on the conditions of the earlier note.

DOCUMENT NO. 453

Extract of memorandum, British Foreign Office to Page, *replying to the proposal made by Hoover relative to Polish relief*

Foreign Office, London
10 May 1916

On the 21st February last the United States Ambassador communicated to Sir E. Grey a memorandum[16] embodying the following proposals for affording relief to Poland:

. . . . . .

His Majesty's Government at once referred the question of prin-

[15] Considerable relief had been provided for Serbia by American organizations. There were proposals early in 1916 to enlarge this program. Political, financial, shipping, and other difficulties prevented the realization of this more ambitious plan. See *Cmd.* 8348, Misc. No. 32 (1916), pp. 8–9, 24–25.

[16] Document 449. The portion omitted here is a word-for-word copy of Hoover's proposals.

ciple involved in these proposals to the Russian Government, who have now accepted it. His Majesty's Government are accordingly prepared to agree to the immediate inauguration of the above arrangement, provided that the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments are prepared to give certain assurances. In assenting in principle to the grant of relief to a territory occupied by the enemy, in spite of the statements recently published by the German authorities that they are in reality able to relieve the Polish population unaided, His Majesty's Government feel that they have made a concession in return for which they have a right to demand that their enemies shall now at length place beyond doubt their intentions towards the populations of occupied territories whose treatment by them in the past has been so much at variance with the responsibilities of civilised warfare and the dictates of humanity. The assurances required are as follows:

1. The scheme submitted by the United States Ambassador relates only to that part of Russian Poland at present in the occupation of the German forces. His Majesty's Government consider it essential that any system of Polish relief should apply to Russian Poland as a whole, and they cannot recognise the existing division into two spheres, occupied respectively by German and Austro-Hungarian troops. There must be a definite undertaking by the two Governments that the export from the whole of Russian Poland of all foodstuffs, native or imported, will be absolutely prohibited, and that any excess over domestic needs which may exist in the southern part under Austrian administration (which is understood to be self-supporting) will be employed exclusively for the provisioning of Northern Poland, whether such foodstuffs are utilised to supply the towns under the care of the Relief Commission or the country districts to be revictualled by the German Government.

2. It is understood from a document[17] which has been communicated to His Majesty's Government by Mr. Walcott of the Rockefeller Foundation, and of which a copy is annexed to this memorandum, that the German authorities in Northern Poland undertake that all food supplies originating in Poland shall be used exclusively for the civil population and the constabulary. His Majesty's Government cannot admit that the constabulary should be allowed to use native foodstuffs which have subsequently to be replaced by supplies imported by the Relief Commission. They must therefore request that in this respect the constabulary should be placed on the same footing as the occupying army.

3. From the same document it appears that the German authorities wish to export from Poland any excess of the potato supply. As a result of the experience which they have gained in connection with Belgian relief, His Majesty's Government are most reluctant to agree to the exportation from Russian Poland of so-called excess supplies, since the question of what constitutes an excess is largely a matter of opinion. Nevertheless, in order not to prolong the negotiations, His Majesty's Government agree to the export of potatoes at such times and so long as, in the opinion of the neutral relief authorities,

[17] See Document 448.

an excess supply in fact exists over and above the requirements of the whole of Russian Poland.

4. The German vessels mentioned under paragraph 4 of Mr. Page's proposal must fly a neutral flag, be under the sole control of a neutral body to be agreed upon, be manned by neutrals, and be run entirely at the expense of the German authorities.

5. It should be understood that the responsibility of the German Government is not ended by the supply of the partial ration mentioned in the above scheme of relief. His Majesty's Government cannot undertake to allow the Relief Commission to import more than a minimum supplementary ration over and above the maximum which the enemy are in a position to supply at any given time.

6. The neutral relief authorities in Poland must enjoy absolutely free and unfettered facilities for the communication to their London office of any data connected with their work. They must have every facility to satisfy themselves of the manner in which the undertakings of the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments are being carried out in all parts of Poland. It is, of course, understood that the "German relief officer for the civil population" mentioned in the enclosed memorandum before alluded to shall have no control of any kind over and shall in no wise interfere with the complete discretion of the American Commission or its representatives.

7. The German and Austro-Hungarian Governments should undertake, as a part of the present arrangements, adequately to supply and care for the populations of Serbia, Albania, and Montenegro, all of which countries are now being reduced to a state of starvation through the removal, or the use by the occupying forces, of the supplies of native foodstuffs. The carrying out of this undertaking should be under the supervision of neutral subjects or organisations in those countries.

His Majesty's Government trust that the above proposals, which represent merely the renouncement of indefensible practices and assurances for the due respect of the lives and rights of the population of occupied territories in the future, will meet with the prompt acceptance of the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments, so that the necessary preliminary arrangements may be made without delay.

DOCUMENT NO. 454

Letter, HOOVER TO PAGE, *calling attention to the slow progress of negotiations, the shortness of time remaining, and suggesting securing the co-operation of the Swedish Government*[18]

LONDON, 12 May 1916

His Excellency, the Hon. W. H. Page
American Ambassador, London

DEAR MR. PAGE:

We have had an opportunity of examining the memorandum on Polish relief which you received from the British Government yester-

[18] The proposal to ask co-operation of the Swedish Government was sent to Grey by Page on the same day (12th May 1916).

day. On this business there is no actual relief action for us to take until it has been submitted to the German Government and their impressions on the matter ascertained.

In the meantime we think it is desirable to point out that five months have gone by since Polish relief was proposed by us and three months since this plan was formulated, that this scheme implies a complete termination on the 1st October and that, therefore, there only remains four and a half months from today in which to operate. Assuming we get at once the undertakings from the German Government in accordance with the British Government demand, the time involved in securing and transferring the German ships, their equipment and return loaded to Baltic ports would probably absorb fully three months. It appears to us, therefore, that oversea food supplies cannot be brought into Poland in consequential amounts during the period yet remaining.

The only hope of the immediate relief of Poland exists in the co-operation of the Swedish Government. If it were agreeable to the British Government to make arrangements for the export of supplies from Sweden it might be possible to secure some immediate relief. I am, therefore, asking Mr. Warwick Greene to go to Stockholm to examine the position there. In any event, nothing tangible may be done until the German portion of the contract is negotiated, with regard to which we are not optimistic.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 455

Letter, GREY TO PAGE, *vetoing any request to the Swedish Government for assistance in relief of Poland*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
23 May 1916

DEAR MR. PAGE:

With reference to your letter of May 12th in which you suggest that the Swedish Government should be asked to supply immediate relief to Poland as soon as the German and Austrian Governments agree to the conditions laid down by us, I would like to say that it appears to be unnecessary to ask for any active assistance from the Swedish Government, and there are reasons of a general political kind which make us particularly anxious to avoid it.

We shall, of course, have no objection to the Relief Commission importing into Poland any foodstuffs which they may be able to obtain in Scandinavia as soon as the scheme actually comes into force, and no doubt the Swedish Government would be prepared to give permits for the export of such foodstuffs from Sweden, if such are required. It would, however, be undesirable that the Relief Commission should call upon the Swedish Government for any more positive assistance than this issue of licences.

I should like to add that it would in the opinion of the Allied Governments be far preferable if supplies were obtained and trans-

ported from Roumania. This would among other things have the advantage of avoiding any question of replacing in the country of export the supplies despatched to Poland, since there are abundant stocks of grain in Roumania which are not required by the native populations and which in fact it is to the direct advantage of that country to export.

Yours sincerely
(Signed) E. GREY

DOCUMENT NO. 456

Telegram, GERARD TO PAGE, *reporting German refusal of British terms and offering a counter proposal*[19]

BERLIN, 1 June 1916

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, LONDON

Have had conference today with Geheimrat Lewald representing an interior department, Geheimrat Grunewald, representing Foreign Office, Prince Lubecki of Polish Committee, and Donovan and Stoever of Rockefeller Commission. Germany cannot accept the proposition as made by England because:

First. Germany can contract only as to Polish territory in her own control. However, in my opinion there is no doubt but arrangement similar to one outlined below can be made with Austria. Please note that all towns named are in territory occupied by Germany.

Second. Germany cannot make question of relief of Poland dependent on Germany and Austria relieving Servia, Montenegro, and Albania, since Germany is not in control of these countries. Germany, however, will use its good offices for the establishment of similar relief work in these countries.

I think an arrangement on the following lines can be made:

First. The arrangement to apply to all Polish territory occupied by Germany commencing fifty kilometers back of firing line.

Second. Germany will give to inhabitants of cities to be relieved the ration proposed.

Third. Germany will undertake the remainder of population outside will be fed.

Fourth. It is necessary that occupying or police army of about 150,000 men be fed on food bought in Poland. These troops are sometimes ten or fifteen in a village and difficulties of transport make this necessary.

Fifth. Proposition as to ships accepted.

Sixth. Germany will arrange to pay for goods wherever bought and their transport.

Seventh. Germany agrees to proposition that excess potatoes shall be exported only when Commission agrees and that no food is to be exported from Poland and used except as above stated.

Provisions as to details of control can be arranged. Germany is

[19] For the official explanation of the German position in these negotiations see *Berliner Tageblatt,* 4th June 1916.

willing to accept control as stated in contract signed by Geheimrat Lewald, Doctor Bicknell, and me in April 1915. Will get details as to numbers of occupying police army and how many in towns and how many in country.

GERARD

DOCUMENT NO. 457

Letter, GREY TO PAGE, *declining to accept the German proposals*[20]

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
15 June 1916

MY DEAR AMBASSADOR:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of June 2nd in which you are good enough to communicate the reply received from the German Government to the proposals of His Majesty's Government for the relief of Poland.

The phrase somewhat loosely used in this reply as to the arrangement being made "to apply to all Polish territory occupied by Germany commencing fifty kilometres back of the firing line" is, I suppose, intended to allude only to the responsibility assumed by the German Government to feed this area, and does not imply an attempt on the part of the German Government to extend the importations of foodstuffs to be made by the American Commission to any other districts but the cities specified in the original proposal which you handed to me, and in my reply. His Majesty's Government could not, of course, for a moment consider importations to other destinations besides those towns; but I do not know whether His Majesty's Government are to understand that the German Government intend to allow the population within fifty kilometres of the firing line to starve.

I do not think it is necessary, at this point in the discussions, to enter into any detailed analysis of the German reply, and I will confine myself to the two points of primary importance raised in it.

The German Government disclaims any responsibility for the relief of Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania on the ground that it is the Austro-Hungarian Government which is in control of those countries. I cannot accept this disclaimer, knowing to what extent the policy of the Central Empires is controlled by the German Government and knowing it is therefore not a question of the German Government exerting its "good offices" with the Austro-Hungarian Government, but of the two Governments jointly assuming a responsibility towards the population whose territory has been invaded by their joint armies. Nothing short of a binding engagement of this kind, which the Central Powers are perfectly able to give, can satisfy the Governments of the Allies, who in this matter are only asking for the same measure of joint action on the part of their enemies which they themselves have already taken in their consultations and their decision upon this question of Polish relief.

[20] For further elaboration of British position in this matter see *Cmd.* 8348 Miscellaneous No. 32 (1916), Annexes 12, 13, 14.

The second point is, to my mind, of even greater importance. The German Government disclaims responsibility for the Polish territory occupied by Austria on the ground that that territory is not within the sphere of Germany's control. The Governments of the Allies regard Poland as a whole and they cannot allow the fate of its population and the question of life and death whether that population shall or shall not die of hunger, to be parcelled out between Germany and Austria, each country claiming a part of Poland in connection with their political schemes for the future, and each disclaiming responsibility for the part occupied by the other. Until there is agreement between the Governments of the Central Empires to throw the resources of the whole country into one, and to give to the Poles, as Poles, the produce of the soil of their own country, the Governments of the Allies cannot move. This is a question of principle, but even were it not so, the conduct of the Austro-Hungarian Government, as it is developing at the present moment in Southern Poland, would make it impossible for His Majesty's government to leave that region out of account in the scheme of relief. I annex hereto a copy of an Order issued by the Austrian Governor-General of Lublin which throws sufficient light on the methods of coercion and the intentions of exploitation which the Austrian Government are employing and cherishing.

For the rest, we must adhere to our original demands, which I still believe would be accepted as reasonable if the German and Austrian Governments were sincere, and I can only trust that the efforts of the United States representatives in enemy countries and of the representatives of the American Relief organisations will soon elicit a more satisfactory reply from the Governments of the Central Empires.

Believe me, my dear Ambassador,

Yours sincerely

(Signed) E. Grey

Lublin, 26 April 1916

The Royal and Imperial Military Governor-General of Lublin has published the following announcement:

In May when the spring work in the fields will be practically completed, the military administration will begin work, within the territory administered by it, on the building of roads and on the Vistula. Numerous labourers will be used for this purpose. The military administration will summon them from among the local population, and form them into labour detachments, each of which will be employed as far as possible within its own village or its neighborhood. It will, however, be impossible to avoid the employment of some detachments in other districts of the Government than their own. It is, however, to be clearly understood that all labour detachments will be used exclusively within the territory of the Government of Poland in Austro-Hungarian occupation. As need may arise, all men fit for work will be called upon. The only exception will be those to whom the district authorities may grant exemption in consideration of their profession or for other weighty reasons, in

accordance with instructions issued to them. In case of need also women will be employed, provided they come forward of their free will. The workmen will be properly paid and fed.

The attention of the population is hereby drawn in advance to the forthcoming order, and to its purpose, so that no one should give credence to false rumours. As work is concerned which will be of considerable economic advantage to the entire country and in connection with which each particular workman will find a sufficient livelihood to maintain himself and his family, the military administration expects that all men fit for work will apply in their own well-understood interest for inclusion in the labour detachments, and will in that way avoid compulsory orders. The intended works are unavoidably necessary from the military point of view, and must be carried out in any case. The military administration hopes that it will not be necessary to use compulsion.

(For the Governor-General)

DIETRICHSTEIN
Major General

[*Translation*]

3. *Subsequent Polish Relief Measures, November 1917*

The British letter of the 15th June 1916 presaged the final breakdown of the negotiations. It was, of course, too late to put the original plan into effect before the harvest. Moreover, important political developments had significantly changed the whole Polish problem. The shortage of man power which had produced deportations and forced labor in Belgium led the Germans to greater lengths in Poland. Along with deportations of Polish workers to Westphalia, a plan was evolved to recruit a Polish army to be used by the Central Powers. Nominally this army was to represent the independent Poland which Germany and Austria, after months of wrangling, had agreed to establish on the fragment of Polish territory occupied by the Germans. The German-Austrian declaration respecting independent Poland was not made until the 5th November 1916, and in the meantime two further efforts were made in behalf of the Poles. On the 7th July the State Department appealed[21] to the belligerents "in the name and interests of humanity," and President Wilson on the 20th July sent personal letters to the King of England, the President of France, and the Emperors of Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary, asking for a fresh consideration of the project and pledging the co-

[21] 64th Cong. 1st Sess. Sen. docs. 494, 540.

operation of the people of the United States. These appeals were in vain. There were no concessions in the replies of the British and German Governments, but only arguments to saddle each other with the responsibility for the failure of Polish relief.

DOCUMENT NO. 458

Communication, UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, *appealing to all belligerent governments to make concessions necessary to permit relief of Poland*

AMERICAN EMBASSY, LONDON
8 July 1916

Mr. Page to Sir Edward Grey

The United States Government, at the request of the various belligerent Powers, has been acting for many months as an intermediary in the negotiations between the belligerents relative to a proposed agreement as to the terms under which relief supplies may be introduced into Poland and distributed therein.

Since, however, all the negotiations have so far failed to result in any agreement which could bring about the desired result, although all the countries interested have manifested a willingness to permit relief supplies to be sent to Poland under certain specified conditions, the Government of the United States, therefore, in the name and interests of humanity, now appeals to all the belligerent Governments to consider whether it is not possible for the Powers on each side to make such mutual concessions in the terms proposed by them for the regulation of shipments of relief supplies into Poland as will make it possible for an agreement to be reached under which relief can be given to the suffering inhabitants of Poland.

DOCUMENT NO. 459

Letter, BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE TO PAGE, *stating conditions required by the British Government for relief in all occupied territories, including Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania, as well as Belgium, Northern France, and Poland*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
26 July 1916

His Excellency the Hon. W. H. Page

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's communication of July 8, in which you are good enough to lay before His Majesty's Government an appeal to all belligerent Governments to come to an agreement for the relief of Poland.

His Majesty's Government desire to settle, once and for all, the whole question of importations of foodstuffs into territory in the occupation of the enemy. They therefore make the following final proposal:

If the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments will reserve wholly to the civil populations of the territories which their armies

have occupied—viz., Belgium, Northern France, Poland, Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania—the entire produce of the soil, all live-stock, and all stocks of food, fodder, or fertilisers in those territories; if they will admit to these territories neutrals selected by the President of the United States with full powers to control the distribution of food to the whole population and to transfer, when necessary and possible, from one territory to another surplus stock existing in the one and lacking in the other; and if the President of the United States will undertake the selection of these neutral agents, His Majesty's Government will on their part give them every assistance in their power and will admit into such territories any imported food supplies necessary to supplement native stocks and to afford to the populations a fair subsistence ration, so long as they are satisfied that their enemies are scrupulously observing their part of the agreement.

If this offer is refused, or if the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments do not reply before the harvest in the occupied territory begins to be gathered but continue to refrain from stating officially, for the information of the Allied Governments, their exact attitude in regard to these questions of relief, His Majesty's Government will hold them responsible, and will exact from them such reparation as can be secured by the Allied arms or enforced by the public opinion of the neutral world, for every civilian life lost through insufficient nourishment in every territory occupied by the armies of the Central Powers.

It is obvious that if this proposed scheme is to be put into operation successfully no time must be lost. The new harvest will shortly be gathered, and for the plan to be of any advantage to the populations of the occupied territories the fruits of the harvest must be placed in neutral control before they have been appropriated for the use of subjects of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

I have the honour to be, with the highest consideration,

Your Excellency's most obedient humble servant

(*For the Secretary of State*)

(Signed) W. LANGLEY

DOCUMENT NO. 460

Letter, HUGH GIBSON, SECRETARY AMERICAN EMBASSY IN LONDON, TO W. B. POLAND OF THE C.R.B., *enclosing German reply to British terms for relief in Poland as forwarded by Ambassador Gerard*

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
LONDON, 10 August 1916

W. B. Poland, Esq.
Commission for Relief in Belgium, London

DEAR MR. POLAND:

On July 29th the Ambassador at Berlin telegraphed us the following translation of a note received from the German Foreign Office in regard to the feeding of occupied territories:

"From the very beginning the Imperial Government declared its readiness to offer its assistance in order that the distress apparent in those parts of Russia that are occupied by German troops and systematically wasted and deprived of all victuals for the use of the remaining inhabitants by the retreating Russian hosts be eased by the relief work of the United States of America, which is organized on such a great scale. The Imperial Government has particularly offered all guarantees consistent with the requirements of war that the imported foodstuffs will only serve the needs of the population of the territory occupied. Accordingly the American relief might have been realized several months ago with the same provisions as in Northern France, had not the Government of Great Britain prevented its accomplishment by clinging to its unfounded and impracticable conditions. In this way it has become practically impossible to convey a considerable amount of foodstuffs from America to Poland by the expiration of the term set, as the end of the relief work is October first. Accordingly further negotiations are devoid of purpose. But on the other hand, thanks to the intense culture of the land effected by the Imperial Government by using all the means available and every effort possible in the occupied territory, and owing to the favorable harvest prospects, a relief action after October first, 1916, can apparently be dispensed with. The fact that the population of Poland and Lithuania will, to some extent, suffer until the new crop is lodged and later on will sometimes have to put up with straitened circumstances can therefore not be laid to the blame of the Imperial Government but to that of Great Britain."

I enclose herewith for your information copy of a note from the British Foreign Office in reply to the foregoing.

Yours very sincerely

(Signed) HUGH GIBSON

DOCUMENT NO. 461

Letter, FOREIGN OFFICE TO MR. LAUGHLIN, UNITED STATES CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN LONDON, *stating that in view of the German attitude further negotiations by the British Government are useless*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
7 August 1916

SIR:

I have the honour to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of Mr. Page's communication of July 31st in which His Excellency was good enough to convey the reply of the German Government to the offer of the Allied Governments with regard to the relief of occupied territories.

I will not comment on the vagueness or the inaccuracies of this reply, such, for instance, as the baseless statement that it would be impossible to import any foodstuffs into Poland before October 1. Such controversy would, I feel, be useless.

His Majesty's Government now have before them the present statement of the German Government in regard to Northern Poland, and

the statement of the Austro-Hungarian Government in regard to Serbia which I had the honour to bring to the attention of the United States Government in my note of July 20. Both statements are diametrically opposed to the assertions of those who submit constant appeals to the Allied Governments on behalf of these occupied territories.

His Majesty's Government note that in the opinion of the German Government, which may be now regarded as in control of Austria-Hungary also, further negotiations are devoid of purpose. In these circumstances His Majesty's Government feel that they can do no more and they must leave it to the Government of the United States to take such further steps, if any, as they shall think right and useful.

I have the honour to be, with high consideration, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant

(*For the Secretary of State*)

(Signed) W. LANGLEY

The tone and content of these British and German notes left no doubt about the futility of further efforts along this line. Within a few months the unrestricted U-boat campaign, the Russian Revolution, and the declaration of war by the United States so transformed the political situation that there was never again any question of reviving the neutral relief project. This, of course, did not mean that the Poles of the Congress Kingdom no longer were in need. The harvest of 1916 had improved conditions somewhat, rendering the import of large supplies from abroad less necessary, but there was still great suffering. Polish factories had either been dismantled by the Germans or forced to close their doors for lack of raw materials; thousands were unemployed and without funds to buy the food which the harvest made available. The Polish and Jewish relief societies in America, in order to aid their kinsmen, made great efforts to increase their contributions for transmission to the local relief committees in Poland. They very soon encountered difficulties, for the Allied blockade not only stopped the flow of food into territories controlled by the enemy, but it also rigorously restricted the movement of funds. The financial life of Poland had been merged with that of Germany, and hence any considerable importation of dollars into Poland would strengthen the German exchange. In view of the suffering, however, the British had permitted limited relief

remittances to go through to Warsaw.[22] After the United States entered the war, the U.S. War Trade Board, which handled such matters, followed a similar policy, permitting certain firms and relief societies to transmit limited relief funds to territories occupied by the enemy.

In the autumn of 1917 the societies interested in relief in Poland desired to transfer very considerable sums to Warsaw. In order to overcome the objections of the Allied Blockade authorities the C.R.B. endeavored to bring the British and Germans to consent to the transmission of these funds through the Commercial Exchange Department of the Commission.[23] By this arrangement the Polish relief funds were to be translated into equivalent marks through the Commission's food imports into Belgium. The marks were then to be transferred to Warsaw for distribution by the local relief committees. In this way relief contributions could be sent from America to Warsaw without bolstering the German exchange, which the Allies wished to prevent, and at the same time the Commission would be furnished with additional funds for its operation. This latter point was important to the C.R.B., for at this time its funds available for necessary European disbursements were exhausted.[24]

This plan, which would have been of great benefit to both Polish and Belgian relief, failed, as the following documents indicate, because the British blockade officials feared it might benefit the Germans, while the Germans feared it would not.

Although the Commission in these long negotiations was unable to bring the belligerents to agree to the establishment of Polish relief, the effort was not without benefit to the Polish cause. The publicity given to the negotiations and the appeal to world opinion promoted by the Commission and the Polish societies in America created an interest in

[22] The Comité Générale de Secours pour les Victimes de la Guerre en Pologne had been permitted to transmit some £49,000 in 1916, and the American Express Company was allowed to remit a limited amount of relief funds each month.

[23] The proposal was first made by John B. White, a member of the War Trade Board and one of the original directors of the C.R.B. Mr. White's proposal also suggested that the Commission be the channel through which all permitted remittances from America to enemy-occupied territory be sent.

[24] See chapter iv, Documents 174 to 183.

and a sympathy for the Polish people which had an enormous influence in bringing about a solution of the Polish question along the lines of Polish aspirations.[25]

DOCUMENT NO. 462

Letter, POLAND TO HOOVER, *regarding British objections to relief remittances to Warsaw*

LONDON, 9 November 1917

H. C. Hoover, Esq.
Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR HOOVER:

I have received your several cables in regard to forwarding Polish Relief Funds to Warsaw through the medium of food importations into Belgium. Upon the receipt of the first one I cabled Rotterdam, explaining the proposition and asking them to obtain the consent of the German authorities to the procedure; also the acquiescence of the Dutch Minister, and also to obtain from Francqui his statement that there would be funds available to carry on the operation in German marks in Belgium. As a matter of fact, I think there is no question whatever about these funds, but we have not heard a word in answer to our cable, despite its urgent nature and a hurry-up that has been sent since. There seem to be a great many political considerations connected with the whole matter. Upon receipt of your first cable, as a matter of form I inquired of the British Foreign Office if the proposal had their approval. I attach copy of reply from the Foreign Office and other correspondence in the matter.

I have been in communication with Mr. Beal of the Embassy, who is appointed on the Committee referred to by Mr. Carr. Mr. Beal advised me confidentially that there is a standing committee on the Financial Blockade of Germany which has been considering this subject of funds being sent into Poland. At present funds are sent over to Holland where pounds are transformed into guilders. The Dutch banks then buy German marks. These funds are then transferred through the German postoffice, usually at Hamburg, and by this means are delivered to various Polish relief committees in Poland. After some time, frequently several months, receipts are returned, or, where the funds have not been delivered, the money itself is returned, so that on the face of it there appears to be a fairly good control. On the other hand, I am advised that most of these receipts are merely marked with a cross and there is great doubt in the minds of the Financial Blockade Committee whether the money

[25] After the Armistice of 1918 Hoover was able to inaugurate relief of Poland, and extensive and varied aid was given to the restored state by the American Relief Administration, the American Red Cross, the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Friends Service Committee, and others. An account of this work is given by H. H. Fisher and Sidney Brooks in *America and the New Poland* and in the reports of the several organizations.

is in fact delivered properly. The most important point, however, is that there seems to be no check upon the exchange. The Polish peasantry will accept only Polish paper roubles. These, it is understood, are turned out in any quantity as required, and dependent upon the capacity of printing presses. Some of the members of the Committee have expressed the belief that Germany gets from one-half to three-fourths of all the money sent in in this way. Last year the small contributions amounted to between £300,000 and £500,000.

I pointed out to Mr. Beal and he will lay a memorandum, which I have prepared, before his Committee, showing that the only way at present available for sending this relief into Poland without bolstering exchange value of German marks is through the food contributions sent into Belgium and transferred in Belgium into German marks and then transferred under the control of the neutral Dutch Government directly to the Warsaw Committee, where it matters not into what currency it is then converted. A memorandum will be drawn up along these lines today which I trust may be useful although I note you can make arrangements with the British Government in New York.

The matter of exchange to be used is one that causes me some anxiety. I presume the Comité National will not want to make an actual loss on this transaction, which will mean that the standard rate of 25.40 would have to be used. I notice you twice refer to a favorable exchange rate being given. Will you not outline by cable on receipt of this letter just what your ideas of appropriate exchange would be.

Another argument brought up by the Finance Blockade Committee is that the Germans make a practice of taxing the Poles just as soon as they find they have any money to pay taxes with and in this way immediately collect everything in the way of cash that is sent in. They also advance the argument that, as the peasantry are working directly for Germany, providing assistance of this kind is almost equivalent to assisting the Germans with money. These are arguments with which you are already familiar.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) W. B. Poland
Director for Europe

DOCUMENT NO. 463

Letter, Sir Adam Block to Boylston Beal, *stating the objections to the transmission of funds to Warsaw by the C.R.B. or otherwise*

London, 16 November 1917

Boylston Beal, Esq.
Embassy of the United States of America
London

Dear Mr. Beal:

In reply to your letter of 13th November respecting relief in Poland, my opinion is as follows:

The relief is, I take it, primarily intended for Poland, and would in the ordinary course take the shape of a remittance of money.

By sending food to Belgium and selling it there you would not be relieving the destitute, but merely placing food within reach of those who have the wherewithal to pay. Further, by the sale of the food you would obtain a credit in enemy-occupied territory, which can, of course, be transferred to give financial relief to the population of other enemy-occupied territory without having had any *direct* influence on the mark exchange. Indirectly, however, the sending of food must have an effect on the mark exchange as it liberates the country where the food is sent from providing funds for the purchase of food abroad.

Further, would the Germans allow the purchases of foodstuffs being made in German marks?

I must say that, as I stated at the meeting at the Foreign Office the other day, it seems to me very unwise indeed to send money into Poland at this moment whichever way it goes. War is war, and destitution and starvation are the calamities of war. It is praiseworthy to mitigate such calamities, but it is the duty of the Germans to support the populations of the country they occupy. Sending money into Poland merely enables the Germans to prolong the war. In fact, the proposal in its origin seems to me to be bad. The German is only too delighted that the starving Belgian should pay for his own food sent in from abroad. It impoverishes the Belgian and relieves Germany from the necessity of finding food.

Yours sincerely
(Signed) ADAM BLOCK

DOCUMENT NO. 464

Letter, VON DER LANCKEN TO VAN VOLLENHOVEN, *declining to consent to the transfer of funds to Poland by way of Belgium*

BRUSSELS, 15 November 1917

His Excellency, Mr. Van Vollenhoven
Dutch Minister, Brussels

SIR:

Referring to your kind letter of October 31, 1917, No. 13015, I have the honor to inform you that I have communicated to the competent authorities the request contained in the above letter, to hand to the Dutch Consul at Warsaw about one and a half million francs, to be transferred to the Benevolent Committee for Poland.

The competent authorities regret very much to be unable to comply with your request, the said transfer being contrary to the monetary interests of Germany. They call your attention to the possibility of transferring values in marks from foreign countries to the occupied territories of Poland, viz., the purchase of marks in neutral countries.

Yours truly
(Signed) VON DER LANCKEN

[*Translation*]

Chapter XII

AMERICA IN THE WAR

Preceding chapters have shown how the Allied blockade and German measures of retaliation menaced or curtailed the activities of the Commission. From early 1915, when the siege warfare actually began, there were recurrent crises chiefly attributable to the growing intensity of the economic war. All these, however, were overshadowed by the events of 1917 which retarded and for a time stopped the flow of relief imports and put an end to the neutral status of the Chairman and the personnel of the Commission. This neutral status was the essential condition of the Commission's existence as a body recognized and supported by the belligerents and endowed by them with privileges and immunities which permitted its operations within and across the opposing lines. It was reasonable to assume that this loss of its neutrality would cause either the replacement of the Commission by another body of neutral membership or the discontinuance of relief. It caused neither. The American declaration of war forced the withdrawal of Americans from behind the German lines in Belgium and Northern France, but at the request of the Allies and with the consent of the Germans the external organization of the C.R.B. remained unchanged in status or function. Thus, though its Chairman became the United States Food Administrator and the Allied Supreme Council recognized Belgian and French relief as a "war measure," the Commission did not become a belligerent, but continued its relations with the Germans through the neutral patrons and through its own representative in Belgium and through the Belgian, French, and Spanish-Dutch Committees. The fact that the belligerents strongly desired the C.R.B. to carry on and that it was able to do so is significant of its position as a non-belligerent war-time institution, a position resting on carefully laid foundations and buttressed by the faithful and efficient discharge of great responsibilities.

1. *The Diplomatic Crises. May 1915–February 1917*

The strained relations between Germany and the United States which followed the sinking of the "Lusitania" in May

1915 presaged a crisis in the life of the Commission of a character entirely different from those which it had previously encountered. The problem for the Commission was to prevent if possible any interruption in the flow of relief to the Belgians and French while the machinery of relief was being reconstructed or adapted to the changed political situation. If the United States declared war, the members of the Commission would no longer be neutrals, they would not be permitted on territory behind the German lines, and it was likely that the Germans would insist not only that the C.R.B. delegates in Belgium be withdrawn but that the Commission's great external organization for the purchase, transport, and delivery of supplies should be replaced by an organization of citizens of a neutral state. This would, of course, mean a fundamental reorganization of the whole relief enterprise.

There was, however, another possibility—that the United States would not immediately declare war, but merely break diplomatic relations. In that case the members of the Commission would still be neutrals and their remaining in Belgium and Northern France would depend on the German attitude. As for the external organization, a diplomatic break presumably would not immediately force a fundamental change. In order to prepare the C.R.B. representatives in Brussels and Rotterdam for the possible emergency, Hoover on the 13th May 1915 wrote out for them his thoughts on the situation with tentative instructions for the steps to be taken in case the diplomatic break occurred.

DOCUMENT NO. 465

Letter, HOOVER TO C. A. YOUNG,[1] *indicating his anxiety over relations between Germany and America due to the sinking of the "Lusitania," and outlining plans in case Americans would have to withdraw from Belgium*

LONDON, 13 May 1915

Commission for Relief in Belgium
Rotterdam

DEAR YOUNG:

We are becoming even more anxious over the question of what may arise as the result of the sinking of the "Lusitania" with respect to our work in Belgium, as it is our impression, from what we hear,

[1] Director of the Rotterdam Office.

that the American government is likely to take pretty vigorous action, and this, from the present outlook of things, may take the form of withdrawing their diplomatic representatives from German territory, which I assume will include Mr. Whitlock and others from Belgium. . . . . The technical withdrawal of an Ambassador is a mark of indignation, but it does not necessarily mean that there is any jeopardy to his nationals remaining in such territory. I shall have to be guided by the various American Ambassadors on this point. If it should happen that we have to withdraw from Belgium, it seems to me there is only one course open to us and that is to appeal to the Dutch Government to co-operate with us in substituting Dutchmen for our staff in Belgium. In other words, that we should ask them to secure for us some Dutch gentleman of character and experience who will take Mr. Crosby's place and who could secure something of a staff to take the place of the American element. In this view, I made an application to the Allies yesterday, to know if this would be a satisfactory arrangement under our guarantees, and I expect a favorable reply from them.

I have been in some quandary as to whether I should not come tonight to Holland, so as to be on the ground myself to co-operate with you in such an arrangement, but for the moment I think I should remain here to keep better in touch with the developments of the situation than I could from that end. We, however, telegraphed to you yesterday that we thought it desirable to ship as quickly as possible the main requirements in Belgium, i.e., on the old hypothesis that 80,000 tons should be shipped into that country each month.

This is a sort of compromise from what I wrote to you the other day. I do not wish to precipitate any panic by anything that we might do. It is of course possible that this situation may blow over through some diplomatic means, and if we had taken any drastic measures, such as withdrawing our people or precipitately dumping in Belgium, we might have made the situation worse.

When all is said and done, it is my belief that the Germans are so anxious that these people should be fed that they will not interfere with these foodstuffs, and that the necessities of the situation have now grown in their minds to a point where we can rely on this as a measure of protection more than we could initially. As a matter of practical administration the co-operation of the C.R.B. and the Comité National in Belgium make enormously for efficiency; but if all of the C.R.B. people were withdrawn from Belgium the feeding of the Belgians would still go on, although of course on a less satisfactory basis, and it is my feeling that so long as the Germans do not interfere with the foodstuffs the Allies will continue to allow them to filter in.

If it became necessary to reorganize the Commission by recruiting Dutchmen for Belgium, I would not propose to make any alterations either in London, New York, or Rotterdam, but merely to substitute Dutch friends for the Americans now in Belgium. Nor do I believe that under these circumstances it would be necessary to maintain as many Dutchmen as we have Americans, but to rely more largely on the Comité National in the distribution than has hitherto

been done. We all recognize that now that the organization is well protected and works like a machine in Belgium, our members have but comparatively little actual administration work to do, but in the main are maintained in Belgium to give assurances as to the guarantees and to give moral support to the Comité National.

It is probable in any event, no matter what happens, that diplomatic *pourparlers* will employ two or three weeks before the final breaking point arrives. If in the meantime we continue shipments on a rather heavy scale into Belgium we shall have got the local people well stocked up, so that they can stand a shock. Such a program on our part obviously undermines our previous scheme of lighter stocking of the provincial warehouses, but these new situations compel us to guide ourselves the best we can as they arrive. Our one and prime object is to save the Belgian and French people until harvest, and I should be glad to have your own good judgment on all these points freely by telegraph from time to time.

I may telegraph to you, asking you to see Dr. Van Dyke and approach Mr. Loudon for advice on the question of substituting Dutchmen.

I also have the feeling that it would be very desirable if Mr. Crosby could come up to Rotterdam and see this letter and be in a position to co-operate with us in whatever measures we have to take. On the other hand, if it should eventuate that we have to make a quick retreat, it would be most unfortunate if he were out of Belgium for long, thus running the risk of being unable to organize such a retreat. On this point, however, I have a feeling that we should be given the same opportunities that diplomatic staffs have. If it became necessary to substitute Dutchmen, I imagine that we should want the Dutch Government to take up with the Germans the question as to whether the Germans would agree to give to the Dutchmen the same facilities that we have enjoyed and the same undertakings.

Altogether you will see from the above that we are in a state of mixed feelings, but I write to you all complexions and shall depend upon the telegraph to instruct you of our views and of the steps to be taken from moment to moment.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) H. C. Hoover

The long drawn out "Lusitania" negotiations finally came to an end with no serious reactions on the C.R.B. beyond certain manifestations of resentment against Americans by German officials. The following year[2] the "Sussex" incident again brought a period of strained relations, but Bethmann-Hollweg and the German moderates were still strong enough to delay the adoption of the unrestricted U-boat campaign and a break was averted. A few months later, however, the

[2] March–May, 1916.

break came. On the 31st January 1917 Count Bernstorff informed the American Government of the German decision to begin unrestricted U-boat warfare and on the 3rd February diplomatic relations with Germany were broken. Hoover was at this moment in the United States, engaged in financial negotiations made necessary by the inadequacy of the subsidies the Allies were then able to provide.[3] It seemed at first that the diplomatic break would be quickly followed by the declaration of war and by the refusal of the Germans to give immunity to relief ships so long as they were under the direction of Americans. Faced with this prospect and in order to prevent any stoppage in the flow of relief, Hoover advised the Commission's London headquarters that the American delegates should remain at their posts in the occupied territories as long as possible; but if they were forced out by the Germans, arrangements should be made with the Dutch Government to take over the whole responsibility for relief then carried by the C.R.B. Five days later, news came from Belgium that the Germans would no longer permit the C.R.B. delegates to perform their duties in Northern France or the Belgian provinces, but that five or six men might remain in Brussels. Such an arrangement would effectively prevent the Commission from discharging its responsibilities regarding distribution and the fulfilment of guarantees by the Germans. The C.R.B., therefore, notified the Germans and the Allies that it was compelled to withdraw its entire organization from Belgium and Northern France. The external services of the Commission would be continued until some new arrangement was made.

DOCUMENT NO. 466

Telegram, LANSING TO PAGE, *concerning the feeling of the United States Government relative to the continuation of Belgian relief and quoting Hoover's wishes respecting the American delegates in Belgium and other relief matters*

STATE DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON
3 February 1917

AMERICAN EMBASSY, LONDON

Regarding Belgian Relief:

Department would be glad if you would express to the British Government the strong feeling of this country and of the Government

[3] See chapter iv, Documents 155–161.

that the relief of the Belgian and occupied French population must in any event continue, for this country will wish to show no less interest in this great work of humanity than has been shown during the last two years by the British and the French Governments, should it become impossible for the Americans to remain in Belgium and in control.

Hoover considers it desirable that the work of relief should be taken over by the Dutch Government, a transfer which could probably be best negotiated by the Belgian Government and American Minister at The Hague. We have telegraphed Whitlock asking him to remain at his post and asking him to secure from the German authorities, for members of Relief, the treatment of diplomatic and consular staff. Mr. Hoover desires you convey following message to Poland and Kellogg:

"Think it extremely desirable for all members in Belgium to remain at their posts even after the departure of diplomatic and consular staff, if Germans will guarantee their freedom to depart if situation becomes entirely untenable. Wish you to take Mr. Page's advice in all matters and to consult freely with Belgian and British Governments particularly on the following questions: First, if any change in sailing directions of ships afloat, such change, if any, to be issued by British Admiralty; second, whether and by what route ships at present in Rotterdam and Atlantic ports should sail. If new British mine field does not interfere, represent to British Government strongly desirability of taking route outside war zone at the present time.

"Ask Spanish Ambassador if he will communicate through Brussels and Berlin that as British mine field and necessity to bunker in the United Kingdom and conditions of charter and insurance render Falmouth Channel route the only practicable passage, the Germans should agree at once to respect relief ships on this route and issue passes to this end, and that all departures are held up meantime. Remit us all the money you can lay hands on at once."

LANSING

DOCUMENT NO. 467

Telegram, HOOVER TO LONDON OFFICE, *concerning withdrawal of Americans from Belgium and desirability that entire work be taken over by Dutch Government, this proposal being due to the attitude of the Germans on assurances of immunity of the Commission's shipping if it remained under American direction*

WASHINGTON, 6 February 1917

COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM, LONDON

It appears to me that situation is developing toward ultimate necessity of withdrawing our men from Belgium. In this case it seems to be absolutely critical that relief should be taken over officially both internally and externally by Dutch Government; that the

personnel in Belgium should be comprised of government or army officers, not volunteers, and that the Government should take over buying and transport operations as part of their own existing import operations. There are many reasons for this attitude: First, if we were to recruit a body of volunteers from minor nationalities to replace Americans and continue external operations as at present, the Commission could then exert no real influence upon Germans inside Belgium. It would be simply impossible for us to take responsibility for integrity or loyalty of the actions of such a staff, no proper communication could be carried on and no proper control exerted over distribution, and if we go to war utterly impossible to hold the C.R.B. together abroad, as the whole of its personnel will probably wish to engage for their own country. It is imperative that we should liquidate the C.R.B. as an institution and secure its honorable discharge. On the other hand, if the Dutch Government took over the work officially, the external operations would become a mere extension of their present operations and the situation of routing and protection shipping is in any event identical with their own case. They could easily reaffirm to themselves all North France agreements. Belgian arrangements are in their joint names already. They would also be under obligation to supply as much local produce as possible and they have strategic position to command respect from the Germans. Of equal importance is that the high esteem in which the Dutch are generally held in the United States and weight of the Government name would enable us to continue efforts in recruiting benevolence and even possible American Government financial support. Owing to existing national sentiment no such support could be commanded for the relief if it were conducted under body of mixed neutrals. . . . In failure of the Dutch it would be better to hand over the whole operation to Danish Government and in failure of this it would be better that internal operations be taken over by the Swiss Government and for the Belgian Government or Comité National to take over external operations. I wish you present these views to Mr. Page and if you all agree to them strongly impress them upon the British, French, and Belgian Governments. Please confirm.

HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 468

Telegram, VILLALOBAR AND FRANCQUI TO HOOVER, *stating the attitude of the German Government regarding the status of the C.R.B. in Belgium, indicating a change in attitude of the German Government*

ROTTERDAM, 11 February 1917

RELIEF COMMISSION, LONDON

Villalobar and Francqui suggest the following telegram to be sent by Gregory to Hoover. Gregory sends same for your information but expresses his own views in telegram which follows. Villalobar and Francqui telegram begins:

"The German Government has notified us that they could no longer authorize American subjects to continue in the service of the C.R.B. in the North of France and in the provinces of Belgium. The German Government consents to allowing five or six Americans to continue to reside in Brussels in order to assure the service of the central administration. The German Government will be very happy to see the C.R.B. continue its activity in Holland, England, and America, on condition, however, that C.R.B. boats will strictly observe the indications laid down by the new blockade and will take the Northern Route for Rotterdam. Belgian coal will be furnished Rotterdam through the medium of the C.R.B. in Belgium, which will assume the transport of this coal by its canal boats returning to Rotterdam. The German Government suggests to take other neutrals who would enjoy the same privileges that the Americans have been accorded until now in order to replace the latter. We could engage temporarily a few neutrals, Spanish, Dutch, and Danish here. The Marquis de Villalobar is working in accord with us and he will telegraph you direct. Finally concerning the merchandise bought in England, the German Government will only consider this question on the condition that this merchandise will be transported to Holland by the Dutch boats which regularly constitute the service Holland England and by no other. This line of boats will be respected by the German Government."

RELIEF COMMISSION

DOCUMENT NO. 469

Telegram, GREGORY[4] TO HOOVER, *referred to in the preceding*

ROTTERDAM, 11 February 1917

RELIEF COMMISSION, LONDON

Gregory advises that von der Lancken informs Whitlock orally as follows:

"Whitlock is asked to remain as assurance of German good faith to the Commission but without diplomatic privileges. Whitlock will probably go out. C.R.B. may retain a few principals in Brussels, and von der Lancken suggests Whitlock, Ruddock, Dietrich, Gregory, and Gray. Could probably get permission substitute and add to others, but all provincial delegates must be replaced by other neutrals and automobile privileges withdrawn. Above applies to present international status. C.R.B. steamers must not touch English ports. Assurance to our men of safe-conduct not in writing but oral assurance repeated."

We must act promptly and you must advise at once if Allied Governments will continue imports on above basis. If not, think little practical good accomplished by our remaining and we had better close operations as soon as possible. Gregory states positively that in event of war he will not remain here. Von der Lancken has

[4] Warren Gregory, Director in Brussels.

promised to place above in writing to Spanish Minister. It might under all the circumstances be desirable to substitute an entirely new personnel of some other neutral country. Please inform Hoover. Further telegram on same subject being sent today through American Legation, London.

RELIEF COMMISSION

DOCUMENT NO. 470

Telegram, GRAY[5] TO HOOVER, *regarding German attitude and the willingness of the American representatives to stay with the work under any conditions.*

THE HAGUE
11 February 1917

AMERICAN EMBASSY, LONDON:

Kindly inform Hoover and the Relief Commission that Gray, now in Rotterdam, advises as follows:

"On the night of February 8th, Rieth and von der Lancken returned to Brussels from Berlin. Conference between Lancken and Villalobar was immediately held. On February 9th at five o'clock Whitlock received from Lancken advice in sense of Gregory's telegram. Bruhn advised Gregory at identically the same hour that personnel could stay as before under present diplomatic relations without change save possibly in the imposition of some slight restrictions in use of automobiles. At six o'clock on the same day Gray was advised of same status, by Schlubach, who said that Rieth had so advised him. At same time Fritz Neuerbourg was advised by Wengersky, who had also attended the Berlin conference, that present composition of Commission would be maintained. We cannot clearly estimate influence exerted by Villalobar in the reduction of the staff to five Americans. We are, however, of opinion that a counter proposal offering conditions similar to those which obtain in Northern France regarding personnel might be acceptable. Recommend, however, that door be left open to future negotiations. Germans will not lay down working conditions possible in event of hostilities. Hope to arrange use of pouch with Van Vollenhoven or Villalobar but first sealing our packages. The members of the Commission are nearly unanimous in the wish to stay with the work under any conditions and they are willing to accept any terms whereby the continuation of the work will be ensured. If change comes the plan is to transfer the shipping department with same personnel to the Comité National, but Baetens desires orders from Hoover before leaving C.R.B. and expresses first allegiance to the Commission. Relief Commission."

LANGHORNE
Chargé d'Affaires

[5] P. N. Gray, Assistant Director of the Brussels office at this time. As will be noted, many messages were dispatched through diplomatic channels during this period.

DOCUMENT NO. 471

Telegram, PAGE TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE, *advising immediate withdrawal of Americans and liquidation of C.R.B.*

LONDON, 12 February 1917

SECRETARY OF STATE, WASHINGTON:

Director Gregory at Brussels informs Commission for Relief in Belgium that von der Lancken, Civil Governor of Belgium, has reported to him that the German Government will no longer permit American members of Commission to exercise functions in Belgium and Northern France. Hoover and his American associates can in my judgment pursue only one course, namely, inform the German Government immediately that every American retires, get all American members out of Belgium and France in whatever way their exit can best be managed by Gregory, with whom Poland is conferring by telegraph, and close the Commission's business immediately in Belgium and France and liquidate it as soon as possible. We shall have to leave to the decision of the British, French, and German Governments the work for the future. Americans can now retire with clean record and make dignified exit without parley, leaving the onus on the German Government.

I regard it as of the very highest importance that Hoover announce retirement under German order emphatically and immediately. Further discussion may lose the present tactical advantage.

I await Department's instructions to me to retire as Patron of Commission which I hope will be given.

Please inform Hoover of the contents of this telegram and your instructions to me.

PAGE

DOCUMENT NO. 472

Telegram, HOOVER TO C.R.B., LONDON, *concerning re-establishment of the relief and indicating that the Commission is completely at the service of the Allies to this end*

NEW YORK, 14 February 1917

RELIEF COMMISSION, LONDON

I hope you have made it clear to British, French, and Belgian Governments that our sole desire is to secure the re-establishment of the relief and that despite any views we hold as to best methods and detail that we are absolutely at their service to this end and that we wish to strongly present fact that there is nothing which so dominates the heart of the American people and all of us, as the continued succor of these people, and there is nothing more important in maintaining the allegiance of America to the Allied cause than that no effort should be spared for its re-establishment.

HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 473

Telegram, C.R.B., London, to C.R.B., Brussels (via Rotterdam), *stating that German decision compels withdrawal of Americans of C.R.B. from Belgium*

London, 12 February 1917

Relief Commission, Rotterdam

Please communicate Whitlock, Gregory:

In accord with Mr. Hoover and Mr. Page, in view of communication from German Government to you through Lancken that Americans can no longer exercise their functions in Belgium and Northern France, please notify the German authorities and Comité National that as under these conditions the American members of the Commission can no longer carry out their responsibilities and undertakings with the other interested governments and toward the peoples of France and Belgium, the American members officially withdraw from participation in the work of the Commission for Relief in Belgium and from the relief work in France. Further inform German authorities that we have assured the Allied Governments on the basis of previous German communications to the Commission that our withdrawal from participation in the work of the Commission does not in any way affect the continued existence of the Commission. Consequently we have also informed the Allied Governments that no guarantees given to the Commission or its Patron Ministers by either of the belligerents are invalidated by our withdrawal. We assume that German authorities will be glad to confirm this understanding to the Patron Ministers. The British Government on their part have expressed their approval of continued importations through the Commission without interruption. We advise you arrange all men leave Belgium and France at once, except you, Gray, Neville, and perhaps one or two others of Commission staff needed to close up affairs and ensure no interruption relief pending reorganization. Important papers and all accounting figures not required to carry on current business should immediately be sent out or if not possible stored with Legation papers under protection of Spanish Minister; close all books and accounts as between Commission Rotterdam, Commission Brussels, C.N., and C.F., as at February 15th midnight, including Rotterdam shipments same date. For annual report extremely important obtain all incomplete data, particularly distributions to communes Belgium, Northern France to October 31st and exact figures of Belgian-French provincial and general stocks as to October 31st, arranging to continue all similar data to February 15th.

Accounts: Complete all transactions as at close of 15th as for complete accounts so that C.N. and Commission are in agreement to enable balance sheet and accounts to be prepared at that date. Include all Rotterdam shipments to date stated. Object in view is to know exact position and to have full detailed records. Final accounts and schedules as at October 31st 1916, also required and should be sent as soon as possible. Jones advises accounts and records more important than audit. Inform Neville.

Relief Commission

DOCUMENT NO. 474

Letter, POLAND TO HYMANS, *informing him of contemplated withdrawal of Americans in Belgium*

LONDON, 13 February 1917

His Excellency Paul Hymans[6]
Belgian Minister, London

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

Yesterday we received a number of telegrams which bring to a crisis our relations to the ravitaillement work in Belgium and France. We have the honor to hand you herewith a long telegram to New York, which was prepared yesterday and forwarded last night, embodying our complete information and outlining the action which was taken in accord with our Chairman, and the instructions sent to our Director and Mr. Whitlock in Brussels.

The notice to the German authorities is made necessary by their action.

As between the Allied Governments and the Commission you will of course understand that we shall take no action which will in any way jeopardize the food supply to either the Belgian or the French people; our operations will continue uninterrupted as at present, in soliciting support, in diplomatic negotiations and shipping and purchasing, until such time as we may mutually have arrived at a new basis, made necessary by the withdrawal of our nationals from Belgium and France.

We hold ourselves subject to your convenience at any time when you would like to discuss future arrangements in detail.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) W. B. POLAND, *Director*

2. *Between Peace and War. February–March 1917*

The Commission's announcement of its decision to withdraw from the relief work had immediate results. Representatives of the British and French Governments issued statements expressing their regret that the Americans were compelled to take this step and their appreciation of the service which the Commission had performed. On their part, the German authorities in Belgium, not wishing to be responsible for the discontinuance of relief, promptly reversed themselves and declared that the Americans might

[6] Letters of similar character were sent to the French Ambassador and the Spanish Ambassador in London. The effect of Hoover's declaration on the German authorities in Belgium is described in Whitlock, *Belgium,* Vol. II, chap. xlvii.

remain in the occupied territories, exercising the same privileges that they had hitherto enjoyed. On receipt of this information the Commission's previous instructions to its staff in Belgium were revoked and the Americans were asked to remain at their posts as long as possible. In the meantime Ambassador Merry del Val in London had notified the Allies that the Spaniards were prepared to take over the work of the Americans, while a representative of the Belgian Government had cabled Hoover to urge that American management of relief be continued as long as possible and in event that the delegates had to be withdrawn from Belgium that the Americans should continue to handle the finance, purchasing, shipping, and other external matters.

DOCUMENT NO. 475

Statement,[1] *by* Lord Robert Cecil, *describing the work of the C.R.B.*

London, 14 February 1917

The withdrawal of the Americans from participation in the work of the Commission for Relief in Belgium and the withdrawal of Mr. Page and Mr. Whitlock from their position as Patrons of the Commission, will be very sincerely regretted by the Allied Governments.

The Commission still goes on in the hands of its other neutral members, but you know how, in practice, the organization of the Relief Commission both here and at Rotterdam and in Belgium and Northern France was created by, and in practice, depended upon Mr. Hoover and his American colleagues, who for more than two years have sacrificed every personal interest to their great humanitarian enterprise. It is they who have dealt daily and hourly with the Foreign Office here, with the German authorities at Brussels and with the German Headquarters in Northern France. They have been the constant intermediaries in a series of most arduous international negotiations, and it is they who have built up the elaborate system of guarantees which has made the continuance of the work possible for twenty-eight months and which stands today as a bulwark between the Belgian people and their invaders.

Now, I am not going to pay any tribute to their business organization or their efficiency, wonderful as these things have been. The mere fact that for twenty-eight months they have kept alive ten millions of people without a single serious hitch in the machinery of purchase, transport, and distribution shows what their organization has been. But this any observer can judge as well as I. What I want to say is this:

[1] Interview with Associated Press. Published in America on the 15th February 1917 in the New York *Sun* and *New York Times.*

When the first proposals were made in October 1914, for the importation of foodstuffs into Belgium after the fall of Antwerp, these proposals were directly counter to every dictate of military prudence. The natural feeling of people here was, and long continued to be, that the Germans were in complete control of Belgium, and how could a dozen or two neutrals safeguard the supplies imported? It was only with the greatest anxieties and misgivings that we consented to allow importations, and I sometimes doubt whether the proposals would ever have been made or our consent given if we had known how long the work would have to last, or the extent to which it would grow. Yet, in spite of this, the work has gone on uninterruptedly for twenty-eight months and has grown from small beginnings into an undertaking which may be literally called gigantic.

Now the only thing which has made this possible has been the absolute confidence which Mr. Hoover and his colleagues have inspired in all the Allied Governments. They have been in the most difficult position and have borne the heaviest responsibilities that could possibly fall to the lot of any neutral, but their absolute frankness in discussion and their energy in carrying out their undertakings have led us to rely absolutely upon their word and upon their ability. How high a tribute this is, no one can perhaps understand who has not had actual experience of war conditions, but the American people may be confident that these American citizens leave behind them in Europe a reputation which, if I may say so, America may count on as a national possession in future years.

I do not speak of the financial help which the American people have given to the Relief, because this is a sort of farewell speech and I am sure that while we must say farewell to the American directors of the work, we need not do so to American interest in the work. On the contrary, I am sure that American interest will in the future be even keener than in the past and that the American people will take a pride in competing with the Allied nations in giving financial support to a great enterprise with which the name of America must forever remain associated.

DOCUMENT NO. 476

Statement,[8] BY BRIAND FOR THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, *relating to the work of the C.R.B. and its continuation by the Spanish collaborators*

[PARIS, 14 February 1917]

At this moment when the German Government is forcing the American representatives of the Spanish-American Commission of Relief to leave the invaded lands and to abandon the task to which they have dedicated themselves with so much devotion, I desire you to express to the Central Committee of the Commission in London,

[8] Transmitted to the Commission by the French Embassy in London on the 14th February.

the recognition and gratitude of the Government of the Republic for the humanitarian work which the American representatives of the Commission, with the devoted collaboration of the Spanish representatives, have carried out, in saving the unfortunate French populations from famine. I do not overlook with what disinterestedness the Commission has successfully administered a most complicated and difficult work, which has necessitated constant and methodical efforts. The devotion of the Commission, of the bankers and contractors to the Commission for Relief in Belgium, who have refused all remuneration, is also known to us. It is to be hoped, for the sake of our unhappy compatriots of the North of France, that this great international work of benevolence may be able to continue to the end of the war. It is to this end that the generous efforts of the King of Spain, to whom the Government of the Republic has just appealed, are at present directed. If, as we like to hope, His Majesty Alphonse XIII succeeds in making the voice of humanity heard in Berlin, we are sure that the services of the Americans of the Commission for Relief will be continued in the same devoted way, in the work of purchase and transportation, thus still contributing, with the cooperation in the country of other neutral representatives who will come to replace the Americans, to the humanitarian task which they now perform.

Of all the acts of charity which now stand to the credit of the Americans and which earn our deepest gratitude, the work of the Commission for Relief is among those which are dearest to us, since they are working for the sake of those French people who add to all their other misfortunes that of temporary separation from their mother country, and who have to suffer bondage to the enemy.

(Signed) BRIAND

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 477

Telegram, C.R.B., ROTTERDAM, TO C.R.B., LONDON, *stating change in German attitude permitting Americans to perform their usual functions in Belgium*

ROTTERDAM, 15 February 1917

RELIEF COMMISSION, LONDON

Brussels advises:

"We have had today a meeting[9] at which assisted von der Lancken, Villalobar, Whitlock, Bruhn, Rieth, Francqui, and Gregory, and which was held concerning your telegram of the 12th instant. It has been agreed that our delegates may remain as heretofore and with the same privileges. However, it is possible that later it may be necessary to place delegates of other nationalities on military fronts. In consideration of this, the Protecting Ministers and Gregory suggest that

[9] The meeting here described followed the publication of the intention of the C.R.B. to withdraw its American delegates in Belgium.

we keep on our regular work as heretofore and consequently we will not close our accounts unless we receive other instructions from you."

RELIEF COMMISSION

DOCUMENT NO. 478

Telegram, HOOVER TO C.R.B., LONDON, *instructing Americans to remain in Belgium and commenting on German tactics*

NEW YORK, 15 February 1917

RELIEF COMMISSION, LONDON

Overriding my previous cables would like you instruct Belgian staff remain long as possible at their posts. The Germans are obviously trying by allowing Whitlock and few to remain to throw responsibility on to us and I have proposed to State Department that Whitlock should be instructed that he will only remain conditional upon his having full diplomatic privileges and upon whole of American staff being allowed remain and exercise their functions as hitherto; and if Germans not prepared for this, then entire Legation and Relief staff will withdraw. The object of this is obviously that we shall throw responsibility on to Germans and although I have no expectation that they will accept it, it is desirable that we should proceed carefully step by step. I do not assume that Allied Governments will consent to form of administration proposed by Germans, as such an administration would be absolutely inadequate for the protection of the people and food supplies; and that in failure to secure retention of our entire staff it is entirely desirable that they should together with Whitlock be withdrawn, in order to clear the decks for a re-established neutral body of some other nationality.

HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 479

Telegram, C.R.B., LONDON, TO C.R.B., BRUSSELS (VIA ROTTERDAM), *directing postponement of liquidation*

LONDON, 15 February 1917

RELIEF COMMISSION, ROTTERDAM

Advise Brussels in view changed attitude of German authorities and overriding previous cables, liquidation not necessary. American staff requested to remain at their posts long as possible but notify German authorities this action taken solely on understanding that representatives' functions, activities, circulation, communication continued in full. Advise whether full diplomatic privileges restored Whitlock. Please be governed accordingly.

RELIEF COMMISSION

DOCUMENT NO. 480

Telegram, Hoover to C.R.B., London, *giving State Department instructions to Whitlock and suggesting an arrangement for continuing functions of the C.R.B.*

Washington, 15 February 1917

Relief Commission, London

State Department tonight emphatically directing Whitlock to demand immediate restoration of his own and our position to previous basis, alternative to which is his and our immediate withdrawal with the whole responsibility on German shoulders. We believe Germans proposed previous stultifying arrangements with intention of throwing on to Allied Governments or ourselves the responsibility of cutting off the relief. In case they refuse, instructions have been given Whitlock to inform Belgian people that this Government and Commission will do all in their power to secure re-establishment of the relief [in the] hands of some other neutral body. We must proceed in the whole matter with great circumspection, step by step. First is as above, and if any our men come into Holland they should remain there until the above issue is determined. If Germans give in to demand we must proceed as before, although I have little anticipation that it will last for long. Second step is in case we withdraw, we should support the creation of new neutral organizations to take charge distribution. Ideal organization would be one under patronage Queen of Holland and King of Spain, but comprised entirely Dutch personnel, preferably army officers or civil servants. New organization to control distribution in interior. Such arrangement is, I believe, in accord with wishes of Allied Governments. Third: after prolonged consideration I believe that if we withdraw will be most important interest the Belgian people that whole purchase shipment foodstuffs should be taken over by Belgian Lloyd. This would enable them build up proper efficient organization which would be inestimable benefit for ravitaillement Belgium after war, and in this matter they could take over our paid staff and officers if they so desired, we of course, removing the whole of our records and accounts. Fourth: The Commission should then retreat entirely to a local American organization for recruiting charity propaganda on behalf of the Belgian people, from which anticipate material results. Fifth: The least which the various governments can agree to in return for our services is that we should have the honor of liquidating our own business and obtaining a proper discharge from our personal liabilities and the retention of our name and organization for effective American use. The matter is not only sentimental but it is of practical importance, in view of legal responsibilities which I personally hold for outstanding liabilities and unsettled operations and the good-will here; when it comes to liquidation it should be undertaken by way of completion for our accounts of some particular cargo to be determined with a view to our stocks and financial position. Sixth: In case of our retirement the Comité National should extend its operations to include the Rotterdam Office, thus

joining up with the Belgian Lloyd. In any event we must get a shipping lane open at the earliest moment and we anxiously await news regarding it.

HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO 481

Letter, MERRY DEL VAL TO CAMBON, *stating the intention of the Spanish members to carry on the work of the C.R.B. after American withdrawal*

SPANISH EMBASSY, LONDON
15 February 1917

To His Excellency, Monsieur Paul Cambon
Ambassador of France, London

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE:

The American members of the Commission for Relief in Belgium having signified to me their irrevocable decision to retire from the work, I have the honor to inform you, in my capacity of founder and President of the Commission, that it will be carried on under the administration of their Spanish colleagues.

Thus, Mr. José Roura, of 14 Seething Lane, E.C., will take the direction of the Commission. He will place himself at your disposal for the information which you will be good enough to give him, in the belief that the Commission will continue to receive in the future the same support as it has hitherto received from the Government of the French Republic, and that it will maintain with Your Excellency and your Government the same good reputation as it has had in the past, resolute, as is the Government of His Majesty the King my August Sovereign, to do all that is possible for the relief of the occupied territories of France.

I pray you to accept, my dear colleague, the assurance of my high consideration and my devoted sentiments.

(Signed) MERRY DEL VAL

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 482

Letter, CAMBON TO MERRY DEL VAL, *suggesting that the direction of relief be left provisionally in the hands of the present directors of the C.R.B.*

FRENCH EMBASSY, LONDON
15 February 1917

His Excellency Merry del Val
Spanish Ambassador, London

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE:

I thank you for your letter[10] of even date concerning the Commission for Relief in Belgium. I know what share you have had in the

[10] Similar letters were exchanged between the Spanish Ambassador and the Belgian Minister in London.

foundation of this institution and how you have never ceased to aid it. I wish here to express to you my appreciation.

The American members of the Commission for Relief had received from the German authorities the order to retire from Belgium and the Federal Government had to cease its patronage on the rupture of its diplomatic relations with Germany. But it is possible that the useful assistance of the Americans may be maintained to the Commission even in Belgium according to news which I have just received, and in London they will be able, at least for some time, to assure the purchasing and transportation services which are just now passing through a difficult period.

It is very important, as you know, that the ravitaillement operations proceed without interruption and to arrive at this result it seems to me advisable to leave the provisional direction to those who up to the present have carried on this mission. This is what the American members of the Commission have been informed this morning and it would be inopportune, in my opinion, to modify the London management of the Commission for Relief before certain financial questions, at present in suspense, have been settled.

(Signed) PAUL CAMBON

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 483

Telegram, CARTON DE WIART TO HOOVER, *urging the continued participation of Americans in the relief of Belgium*

LONDON, 17 FEBRUARY 1917

HOOVER, NEW YORK

Allow me to impress again how important I consider both American and Belgian points of view that management relief be continued up to end by Americans as far as physically possible. Even if you have to eventually abandon activity in Belgium the external activity is of essential importance diplomatically, charitably, and materially. If external activity of relief were transformed in a purely business organization the character of whole work during past would be affected by it. I fervently hope the direct co-operation of our American friends will last as long as our trials, thus to remain forever closely associated with them in memory of Belgian people. Amitiés.

CARTON WIART

DOCUMENT NO. 484

Telegram, CARTON DE WIART TO HOOVER, *again urging in the name of the Belgian Government continued American participation in C.R.B.*

LONDON, 23 February 1917

HOOVER, NEW YORK

Have communicated your cable to Van de Vyvere who asks me to assure you that Belgian Government counts more than ever on co-

operation of our American friends and moreover hopes to associate very closely C.R.B. with economic reconstruction of Belgium and wishes to confer with you as soon as possible on the subject. Unable to communicate before some time your cable to Comité National but messages received from them indicate most positively their great desire and hope American co-operation to remain in as many features of relief as possible. This unanimous desire amongst us is based not only on Belgian interests but also on Belgian feeling for America.

CARTON WIART

DOCUMENT NO. 485

Extracts of letter, MERRY DEL VAL TO POLAND, *giving German attitude in favor of continued participation of Americans in the relief in the occupied territories despite severance of diplomatic relations*

SPANISH EMBASSY, LONDON
23 February 1917

W. B. Poland, Esq.
Director, The Commission for Relief in Belgium, London

SIR:

As I had the pleasure of informing you verbally last night I communicated by telegram to the Spanish Government the contents of the Memorandum attached to your letter of the 22nd inst., begging them to press the matter as vigorously as possible in Berlin.

. . . . . .

The reply from the Imperial German Government is expressed in two communications. The first of these set forth the . . . . [route for relief steamers.]

. . . . . .

In their second communication, dated February 18th, the German Government declare that in spite of having broken off diplomatic relations with the United States, the humanitarian work of the Relief of Belgium, founded on an agreement to which Spain is also a party, may continue and that the German Government consider it convenient that the present American members of the Commission should also continue provisionally at their post. This will not prevent the possibility of their replacement if necessary by other neutral agents being examined. There is no reason why some of these American citizens should not remain in Brussels at the head of the Commission until further notice.

Such are the contents of the German Government's replies. I hasten to transmit them to you and will be glad to communicate to the Spanish Government your impressions regarding the same.

I remain,

Yours faithfully

(Signed) A. MERRY DEL VAL

DOCUMENT NO. 486

Telegram, Hoover to C.R.B., London, *delaying withdrawal of Americans in Belgium until absolutely necessary, and agreeing to formation of Allied Commission in an eventuality*

New York, 27 February 1917

Relief Commission, London

Regarding information from American Ambassador to State Department, we do not wish to withdraw our men until it becomes absolutely necessary and in fact would like to have them remain until they are ordered out by the Germans. Whitlock is being instructed by State Department to remain in Belgium as long as the American members of Commission remain, and when situation arrives at point where he must withdraw either because of German request or from views of this Government on situation, he will be instructed by State Department to bring with him the Relief Commission. We do not wish you to take any action in the matter as we are extremely anxious that we shall leave Belgium either at the order of the Germans or alternatively upon the order of the United States Government, and would like you to convey this information to Brussels privately. With regard to arrangements in event withdrawal Americans we see no objection to the proposals made so far as they concern the control of the distribution from Rotterdam. As to arrangements for Allied Commission seems to us this covers entire matter, but as it does not press, we will advise you later. Do not commit us in any way without reference, as we must act in cooperation with Washington.

Hoover

The change of front by the Germans in respect to the privileges of the C.R.B. delegates and the absence of any outstanding incident in the political sphere relaxed the tension on the Commission. The matter of reorganization was held in abeyance, while Hoover and the other members concentrated their efforts on the matter of shipping, which was in a very desperate situation as a result of the U-boat activities.[11] There was, however, some discussion of an inter-Allied committee to take over the external functions of the C.R.B. in the event of a declaration of war by the United States; but no final decision was made.

Toward the end of February the political situation took a new turn. On the 28th the Associated Press published the

[11] See chapter v, Documents 227 to 242. The critical situation of relief in these days can be realized only by considering the diplomatic and shipping crises together.

Zimmermann Note, offering Mexico the states of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona if she would join Germany in the event of war with the United States. On the 25th a U-boat sank without warning the British liner "Laconia" with the loss of two American lives. The President, meanwhile, had asked Congress for authority to arm American merchant vessels, and though this authority had not been given because of the filibuster of the "little group of wilful men" in the Senate, Wilson announced on the 7th March that guns would be placed on the ships. These events brought the declaration of war appreciably nearer, and the question of the reorganization of relief became of more immediate concern.

In the new discussions the idea of the complete withdrawal of Americans from relief was abandoned in deference to the wishes of the Belgians and the other Allies, who were insistent that the Commission as constituted continue to carry on the external relief operations even if it became necessary to recall the American members from the occupied territories. This arrangement, moreover, avoided friction with the Spaniards, who had promptly offered to take over the work from the Americans and who would have been offended had their offer been declined by the Allies and the contemplated inter-Allied committee been established to carry on the Commission's work.

DOCUMENT NO. 487

Telegram, Hoover to C.R.B., London, *presenting alternate plan for continuation of the relief organization, the only change being the substitution of Spanish-Dutch members for the American delegates in the invaded territories*

New York, 1 March 1917

Relief Commission, London

In event our retirement from Belgium and in such case the proposed substitution inter-allies committee and liquidation Commission, in view Belgian protests and changed conditions here, and after careful consideration and consultation with important men, have come to the view that despite the apparent reversal of previous attitude yet for national reasons in the main—in order to maintain and augment American sentiment Allied cause and maintain the prestige of Commission before American charitable public—it is our duty despite sacrifice and many reasons to the contrary that if approved by the Allied Governments we should carry on the Commission under present direction with our terminal at Rotterdam. Wish

you lay entire matter before Percy and secure frank opinion Allied officials. The administrative arrangements at Rotterdam terminal will require some consideration as to whether our contact should cease at out-turn ships into hands Dutch-Spanish group who in turn re-transfer to Comité National or whether we continue manage Rotterdam office and out-turn direct to Comité National as present. In the first case we should require an office Rotterdam in any event to make settlements with intermediate committee and would appear to us that the second case is the more practical. It is always possible that situation may develop to alter these views, making inter-allies committee desirable, and it might eventuate that such a committee would want to embrace joint American participation, as I have in view that if we join in war American Government might be induced join in support Belgian people and in any event we may yet be wanted to find loans or for other service. In any event, we feel strongly that nothing should be done by way of the erection of inter-allies committee and our liquidation until we have had a month or so to see clearly what is in the best interests of the Belgians, the Allies, and the Americans, and in any event so long as we remain in Belgium no changes of any kind are to be made from our present organization.

HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 488

Extract of letter, HOOVER TO POLAND AND KELLOGG, *summarizing the various proposals for reorganization of the relief in the event that the United States should declare war*

NEW YORK, 5 March 1917

W. B. Poland, Esq.
Vernon L. Kellogg, Esq.
London

DEAR FRIENDS:

With regard to our partial or entire withdrawal from the Relief, we have all of us of course—and myself in particular—altered our views from time to time as to precise organization, because of changing political situation.

It was our first conviction that it was only a question of hours after February 1st until the United States should openly declare war. Ten days later we became convinced that this was not only improbable but that both Germany and this country were making every effort to avoid actual war, and the restoration of our men in Belgium and Northern France after being expelled seemed to us to present a new situation. Finally, during the last three days, as the result of the "Laconia" incident, the exposures of German intrigues here, and the action of the President and Congress, it now again looks like actual war sooner or later and consequently at least the retirement of our men from Belgium and Northern France.

Beyond these changing political situations there are the following principles which have dominated our minds:

1. We must assume that if we are compelled to retire from Belgium some other neutrals must at least take over the control of the distribution and under this head several alternatives seem to present themselves:

The first is that we should select a body of mixed volunteer neutrals who would simply replace the Americans and that we should continue the C.R.B. as at present.

A mere tyro in administrative experience must be convinced that this could only result in an ultimate breakdown. While we would have responsibility, we could have no real control over such a group; we are not in position to determine the character and loyalty of such men; there must certainly grow up intrigue with the Germans or the Belgians with some of such individuals; there must be internal friction amongst the body of mixed nationalities—therefore there could be no discipline, no adequate control of distribution, and no guarantee in territorial allocation of justice in Belgium and Northern France. Sooner or later all confidence in the controls would be undermined. There are other difficulties in the Belgian problem well known to you, which I will not enter upon here, further than to mention that they would multiply under such an administration.

2. The second of these alternatives was for some one nationality to take over the separate patronage of internal control, and this operation could be performed either by a volunteer body or by agents of the government in question. I do not believe it is possible to secure sufficient volunteers of a high degree of idealism from any one of the nationalities available and that it would be better to place it under the control of either the army or some civil department of such a government, to be staffed by government agents.

Furthermore, such an organization as this would commit the government concerned to a strong support of the guarantees and of the Relief.

3. When we survey the available material, we have practically only the Spanish, Dutch, or Swiss to consider. . . . . The Dutch enjoy a high reputation for integrity and efficiency and stand high in sentimental esteem, especially in the United States and would be well supported here. Of more importance than all this, the Dutch control a great measure of supplies which could be made available for Belgium, and the direct responsibility on their part for the distribution would lead them to further exertions by way of native supplies. They are able to command men of a wider experience in language and a greater knowledge of Belgian life than any other nation.

4. It is extremely desirable, from the point of view of moral support to the Allied cause and to the Belgian cause in particular, that the great organs of the National Committee[12] in the British Empire

[12] National Committee for Relief in Belgium, established in April 1915 to take over the stimulation and collection of donations for the C.R.B. from British Empire sources. See chapter xv.

and of the Commission for Relief in the United States should be maintained in great activity in the direction of recruiting public charity and public opinion. This has come during the last few days to have even a higher value in the United States than may be apparent in Europe. We are probably faced with agitations for embargoes on food supplies owing to world shortage, and it is necessary to maintain here a strong organization in order that there may be no prejudice to Belgian supplies and which can insistently advocate strongly the necessity for a proper division of our abundant foodstuffs with the Allies themselves. There is no organ in the United States which stands in such high esteem and influence in the matters today as does the Commission, and it is of extreme importance to all these causes that there should be no break in its activities. These activities would be further enlarged if our men should be forced out of Belgium, because then the necessity for personal neutrality would have departed and we could carry even stronger conviction on all of these various phases if we were not under the present restraint which we are now compelled to maintain.

5. We believed that it would be of great value to the Belgian Government for them to take over themselves, as a governmental measure, the buying and shipping of the supplies, for not only would they be able to bring governmental pressure to bear to secure shipping and supplies, but, of more importance, they would have established a consequent organ through which they could carry on the ravitaillement of the Belgian people during the necessary period after peace. We thought from all that has taken place during the last year that they—so anxious for the increase in Belgian prestige and the demonstration of the self-sufficiency of the Belgian people—would be anxious to take over the providing of their own people, not only for its effect in Belgium itself, but for the great moral influence that it would have abroad, and we felt that they might like to embrace this opportunity of a general change with this objective in view. On the other hand, we have since received the positive and strong protest of the Belgian Government against such a course and their strong request to us to continue, so that we presume this possibility is eliminated.

6. We have no desire whatever to run away from the Relief. It represents an increasing sacrifice to us, but having set our hands to this plow, we are prepared to go on with it if it continues in a form which would have proper, weighty and important objectives that would make it worth while, that is, if the interests of the Belgian and French people were of necessity served by us and if it continues to have importance from American national point of view in the contribution of our national spirit and ideals.

We cannot allow any complexion to be put upon the matter that would suggest that we are running away from any service of this character. Our one desire is in effect to carry it out if it is desired by the Allied Governments that we should do so.

7. If, however, it is determined that we should not only retire from Belgium and Northern France but from the buying and ship-

ping offices, it then becomes absolutely necessary to us that we should liquidate the C.R.B. as a business organization and maintain it only as a charitable recruiting agency in America. We have handled up to date over $275,000,000;[13] we have outstanding liabilities of over $20,000,000 and these latter are based on our personal credit and reputation. We have hundreds of unsettled accounts throughout the world, and if we deserve nothing else for these two and half years service, we at least deserve to have this business settled up in a proper and businesslike manner, a proper auditing and settlement of our accounts and liabilities, a proper relief to us of our financial responsibility, and a properly acknowledged discharge from all of the governments concerned, of our having conducted this work with integrity and with circumspection. This could only be accomplished by the liquidation of the C.R.B. and the initiation of a new organization to take over buying and shipping phases. There is also the sentimental fact that we, the present individuals, initiated the whole Belgian Relief. We made the C.R.B. into an institution of world-wide repute for integrity and efficiency and high ideals. For us to step out and allow some other administration to come in is a risk to these principles and the reputation of this institution to which we do not deserve to be exposed.

8. It has been our view all along that we should remain at our posts in Belgium unless the Germans render our position intolerable, thus securing to themselves the responsibility for any break. This is the strong desire of the State Department at Washington, as well as of ourselves. There is only one alternative and that is that should this Government determine to declare war, it would be obvious as a duty of the Government to recall Mr. Whitlock and the Commission coincidently. We have been anxious that in case of a recall it should be done by the United States Government, based on the judgment of intolerable conditions of safety and not by ourselves. There is a responsibility attaching to breaking down this work which we do not wish ourselves to assume and there is a responsibility in leaving our men in Belgium and Northern France which is primarily a responsibility of the Government. They have agreed to assume both these responsibilities and it is therefore up to us to co-operate with them intimately.

In view of the above principles, we have in the voluminous cable correspondence with you argued from many points of view against the various suggestions of reorganization which have been set up in Europe. These proposals may be summarized as follows:

a) The proposal that we should recruit a mixed body of other neutrals for Belgian and Northern France administration and continue as at present. The objections to this are in violation of the principles set out in paragraph I (Disorganization of mixed neutrals) above.

b) The proposal of the Spanish Ambassador in London that Spanish gentlemen should step into the shoes of the Americans and con-

[13] The Commission had handled government subsidies alone to this amount by this date.

tinue the C.R.B. as at present. This violates the principles set out in paragraphs 3 (Exclusive Spanish control), 4 (Public support in America and England), 6 (Our abandonment of Relief), and 7 (Liquidation of our financial responsibilities).

c) The proposal that we should on February 15th have notified the Allied Governments that we are handing the whole Relief over to them and are withdrawing, violates the principles set out in paragraph 6 (Our abandonment of the Relief) and 8 (Throwing responsibility on the Germans).

d) The proposal that a Spanish-Dutch Committee with predominant Dutch character should be set up under the aegis of the Dutch and Spanish Governments, to take over the control of distribution in Belgium and Northern France meets, we imagine, as far as the diplomatic situation permits, the objections set out above in case we must retire from Belgium, and with this we are in accord, although we would like to see an exclusively Dutch administration.

e) The proposal that an inter-Allied Committee should be set up to handle the purchase and transport of supplies of course meets our acquiescence if it be desired by the Allied Governments. On the other hand, having gotten to this position, it is our feeling that the C.R.B. could quite well continue as it stands today, under its present direction, with its terminal in Rotterdam, selling its supplies to the Comité National exactly as at present, the Dutch-Spanish Committee confining itself to distribution and control. The advantages of this appear to us at the present time to be manifold. It continues in a large way the American interest in the Belgian and the Allied cause; it gives the C.R.B. a stronger background upon which to continue its propaganda in America for charitable support, as it continues the sense of obligation of the American people, and having built up an efficient business organ for handling this enterprise it continues this organ without disturbance; it does not necessitate any liquidation of accounts until after the war is over, when it can be done properly and methodically.

We cannot of course anticipate all that may happen between now and the end of the war. It may be necessary for us to retire absolutely from the Relief, but in any event, the continuation on the basis of a Dutch-Spanish Committee in control of distribution and guarantees, the C.R.B. running to a Rotterdam terminal and there turning over the goods to the Comité National, would appear to us to be the proper thing to do for the present, in view of all the circumstances involved. We have therefore cabled you fully on this matter as we are anxious to learn the frank desires of the Allied Governments.

I regret intensely that I have not been in Europe during this crisis and will return as soon as I find I cannot be predominantly useful here.

I should be glad if you would furnish Lord Eustace Percy and Mr. Chevrillon with a copy of this letter.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 489

Letter, Spring Rice to Hoover, *quoting attitude of British Foreign Office as strongly in favor of continued American control*

British Embassy, Washington
8 March 1917

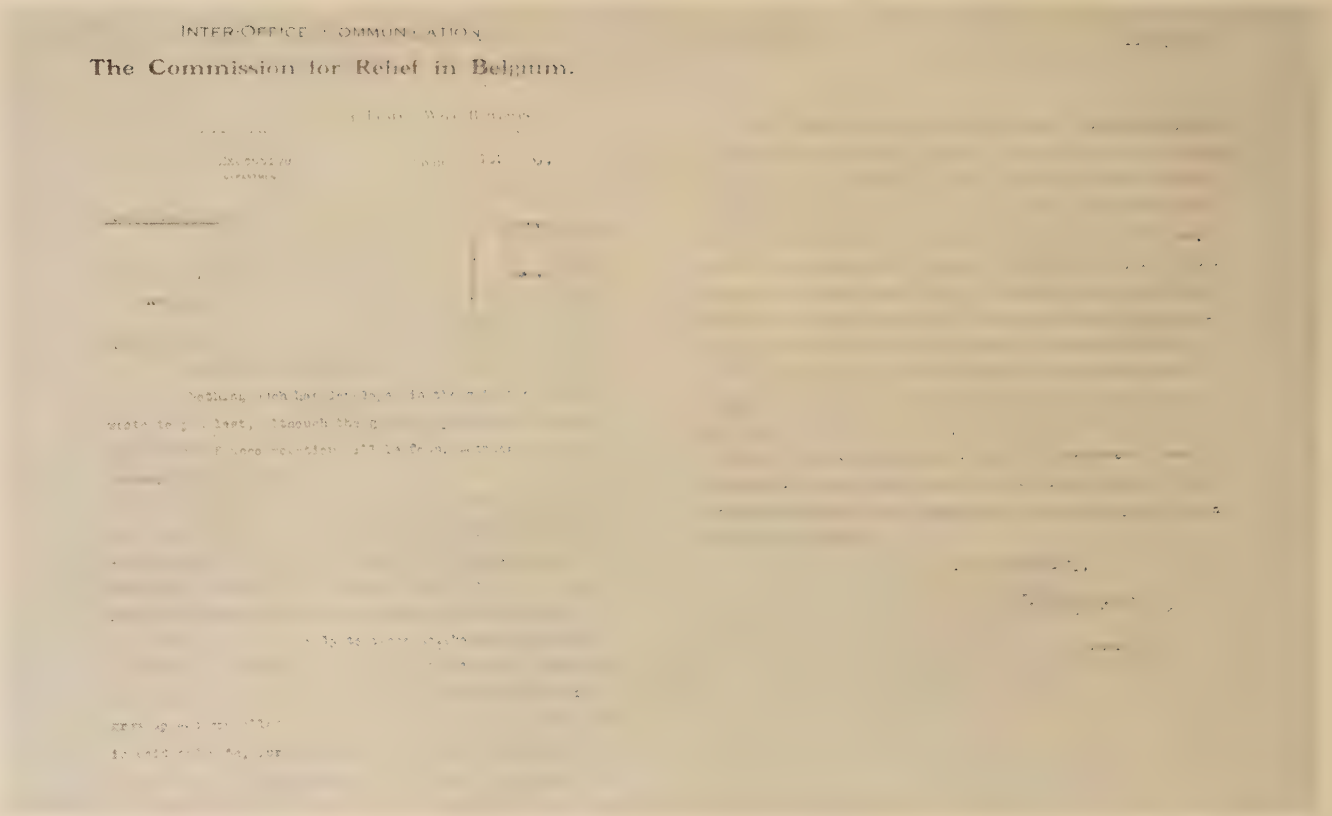
My dear Mr. Hoover:

The Foreign Office have telegraphed requesting me to communicate, confidentially, to yourself and to the State Department the following statement of the position in regard to Belgian Relief:

"At the time of the threatened withdrawal of Americans from Belgium, the Relief Commission stated emphatically that they must in that event liquidate and retire wholly from any participation in the work in London or Rotterdam. In view of this we have been endeavouring to sketch an inter-allies organisation in England and a Dutch organisation in Holland which would, to some extent, protect us from having to accept all the business of control in (here are two words lost in transmission). We have not communicated with Hoover or the United States Government as we understand that, though they were most anxious to continue American interest in the work so far as raising money was concerned, they wished to disclaim all responsibility for any organisation in London or Rotterdam designed to succeed them. Now Mr. Hoover has telegraphed to the Commission here that on consideration he has reversed his former view, and would be willing that Americans should remain in charge of the London and Rotterdam offices. Such a solution would be a great relief to us because the constitution of any competent new organisation at these two places would, we have found, inevitably create friction with the Spanish Government, owing to the ambiguous nominal constitution of the existing Commission. If Americans will remain in control we shall of course be glad to arrange for it to be made clear that their responsibilities after the withdrawal of their delegates from the occupied territories are fundamentally different from their previous responsibilities and that they are fully and finally discharged from those previous responsibilities.

If the American Commission finally decides to adopt this course with the approval of the United States Government we should be glad to be placed in a position at once to notify the Spanish and Netherlands Governments of the fact."

In addition to the above message, the Foreign Office have instructed me to discuss with you the financial situation of the Commission. It appears that, while the British Government can, to a certain extent, increase the subsidies which they are now giving, they cannot undertake to provide an increase up to the full amount which would be required if the present programme of imports is to be maintained. The British authorities feel in the circumstances that it should be possible for a sum of at least five hundred thousand pounds a month to be provided in the United States, more or less on the same lines as the French and British subsidies. Perhaps you



INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

The Commission for Relief in Belgium.

Letter, 18 May 1915, Hoover to Young

could let me know your views on this aspect of the situation, so that I can cable your opinion to London.

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours

(Signed) CECIL SPRING RICE

DOCUMENT NO. 490

Telegram, C.R.B. LONDON TO HOOVER, *quoting letter from Hymans expressing approval of the Belgian Government for Hoover's decision that the present organization be maintained*

LONDON, 8 March 1917

HOOVER, NEW YORK

Following letter received: begins, "London March 7th. I have learned with deep satisfaction that Mr. Hoover and his colleagues have consented to maintain as far as is possible the present organization of the Commission for Relief. He himself and colleagues will continue to exercise their most useful functions at Rotterdam and at London even in case of complete rupture between the United States and Germany. I am charged by the Government of the King to inform the Commission that it approves this solution most earnestly. It seems to be the best solution to the efficient continuance of the work of ravitaillement since Mr. Hoover and the members of the Commission have directed this work since its inception with such noble devotion and wherein they have shown such remarkable capacities. It is once more an occasion for me to express to them the lively gratitude of the Government and the Belgian nation and I should be obliged if you will kindly forward these expressions to your most distinguished President. Hymans." Ends.

RELIEF COMMISSION

DOCUMENT NO. 491

Telegram, BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE TO FRENCH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, *stating British Government's view of future of C.R.B.*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
22 March 1917

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PARIS

1. His Majesty's Government understand that the French Government would be glad to have a brief explanation of their precise view on the subject of the future organisation of the Commission for Relief in Belgium and Northern France.

2. It is unnecessary to enter into any historical account of the organisation of the Relief Commission. It is sufficient to say that the continuance of its work has been made possible by the fact that its establishment has fulfilled two requirements. These are: First, a thoroughly efficient business organisation for the purchase, transport and distribution of supplies; and secondly, the presence in the occupied territories of thoroughly reliable delegates in free and constant communication with the head office of the Commission and in

a position to report fully on the machinery of distribution and on the action and attitude of the German authorities.

3. Any future organisation established to take over any part of the functions of the present American Commission must fulfil these two requirements. Provided that this is secured, the Allied Governments need not, and indeed ought not to trouble themselves as to the precise details of the Relief Commission's administrative arrangements.

4. His Majesty's Government, in agreement with the French and Belgian Governments, desire that the present business organisation of purchase and transport should remain unchanged in the hands of the present American managers. The offices of the Commission at Rotterdam, London and New York would thus undergo no alteration. If and when the United States enter the war, His Majesty's Government consider that it might be valuable to associate Englishmen, Frenchmen and Belgians with the American managers, in order clearly to show the interest of the Allied Governments in the work, but this need necessitate no actual administrative change in the machinery of the Commission.

5. On the other hand, the American managers will be unable to exercise personal control over conditions in occupied territory, and they will thus neither be able to guarantee a sound method of distribution nor will they be able themselves to ensure a constant flow of information from the delegates in the occupied territories to the offices at Rotterdam and London. It is therefore necessary that some supplementary organisation should be created with headquarters on neutral soil in Holland, to act as connecting link between the American managers on the one hand and the delegates and distributing agencies in Belgium and Northern France on the other.

6. His Majesty's Government believe that this function can best be discharged by a Dutch organisation. There are two possible forms which such an organisation can take.

7. It can either be a distinctly independent body capable of organising the machinery of distribution in the occupied territories and of accounting in detail to the Allied Governments for the disposal of the foodstuffs imported, or it can be merely a subsidiary organisation acting purely as the agent of the American managers and reporting and accounting directly to them. If the American managers are, in practice, prepared to make themselves in some measure responsible for the conduct and efficiency of the delegates in the occupied territories, whose activities they will not be able personally to inspect, the latter alternative would probably be preferable. It would obviate the necessity for a double system of accounts, and it would render less likely any conflict of authority or difference of opinion between the American Commission and its Dutch branch. It must rest mainly with the American managers of the Commission to say whether this solution will meet their views. If they feel that it entails too great responsibility upon them, it will be necessary to set up a more elaborate organisation in Holland and to appoint a Dutch business man on whose ability and sentiments the Allied Governments can rely, to assume definite responsibility for all matters beyond the Belgo-Dutch frontier.

8. In either event, it will be necessary to nominate some prominent neutral, preferably a Dutchman, with some experience of political business, who could carry out such part of the constant diplomatic business between the Relief Commission and the German authorities as cannot be adequately discharged by the Spanish Minister and the Dutch Chargé d'Affaires at Brussels. For it must be remembered that the diplomatic patrons of the Commission cannot, in view of their position and the policy of their Governments, go beyond a certain length in pressing the demands of the Relief Commission upon the Germans. In the past it has been Mr. Hoover's ability and energy which have enabled the Allied Governments to secure guarantees from the Germans which could never have been obtained by the ordinary methods of neutral diplomacy.

9. It must obviously be left to Mr. Hoover to select a man for this position with whom he feels that he can co-operate and on whose activity he can rely.

10. In general, it is desirable that the American managers of the Commission should keep in their own hands, so far as possible, the appointment of all delegates in the occupied territory and of all persons in Holland who are to form the nucleus of any neutral organisation which may be set up there. The diplomatic patrons of the Commission must not interfere with this function, but must confine themselves to matters of negotiation between the Governments.

11. In order to obtain the necessary diplomatic support it unfortunately seems necessary to associate more than one neutral Government in the protection of the work. The Spanish and Netherlands Governments have already given their protection and it has been suggested that the Swiss Government should be associated with them. His Majesty's Government are perfectly ready to accept this latter proposal, but, while this species of "Condominium" between various neutral protecting powers is advisable from the point of view of negotiation, it seems essential that so far as possible the actual administrative personnel of the relief work in the occupied territories should be of one nationality.

DOCUMENT NO. 492

Letter, VON DER LANCKEN TO VILLALOBAR, *regarding safe-conducts for American delegates leaving Belgium*

BRUSSELS, 12 March 1917

To His Excellency the Marquis de Villalobar
Minister of His Majesty the King of Spain, Brussels

MONSIEUR THE MINISTER:

Replying to the letter which Your Excellency was good enough to address to me on the 6th of March last, concerning the members of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, I have the honor to communicate that Monsieur the Governor General has consented that a safe-conduct should be granted to the American members[14] of the C.R.B.

[14] American delegates began to leave Belgium on the 1st April 1917. Hoover, in the meantime had returned to London via Spain and France.

designated in the annex of your above-mentioned letter, whenever they should ask for them and whatever may be the position between Germany and the United States of America. In all cases a quarantine of not exceeding four weeks duration is necessary before their departure to satisfy military interests.

I beg Your Excellency to be good enough to bring the above to the attention of the Commission for Relief in Belgium and I profit by the occasion to renew to Your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) LANCKEN

[*Translation*]

3. *The American Declaration of War and the Reorganization of Relief. April–July 1917*

While various plans were being discussed relative to the reorganization of the relief machinery inside and outside of the occupied territories, the period of America's "armed neutrality" came to an end. On the 18th March the news came that three American ships had been sunk by U-boats with a loss of fifteen lives. The President advanced the special session of Congress to the 2d April and on the evening of that day delivered his war message. The joint resolution declaring the existence of a state of war with the Imperial German Government passed the Senate on the 4th and the House on the 6th, and the President immediately issued his war proclamation.

The declaration of war by the United States meant that the withdrawal of the members of the Commission in Belgium and Northern France must be hastened and the new organization, which had been the subject of discussion since the beginning of February, promptly established. Hoover, who had now returned to London, worked out a plan in which the British concurred along the following lines: The Commission should continue its functions outside of the occupied territories, being responsible for the delivery of supplies to the Comité National and the Comité Français at the various terminals in Belgium and France. The Commission should also maintain a shipping and accounting office in Brussels, employing Belgian citizens of its appointment. In other words, it was to carry on as in the past all the operations relating to finance, purchase, oversea shipping, transshipment from Holland, and accounting. A new committee, provisionally named the "Comité Neutre de Protection du

Secours" under the patronage of the sovereigns of Spain and Holland should be formed to maintain the guarantees of the belligerents and free communication in the districts receiving relief. All the governments concerned immediately accepted the proposal in so far as it applied to functions of the C.R.B., but various minor but troublesome difficulties were encountered in setting up the new neutral committee. There were objections to the name; the Swiss asked to be allowed to participate; and there were appointments which did not meet the approval of all concerned. Meanwhile matters were not going well in Belgium. All the Americans except Gray, C.R.B. Director in Brussels, and one or two others were now out of the country; the Spanish and Dutch delegates who were to take their places were still unappointed, and there were reports of violations of guarantees by the Germans. Before leaving for the United States where he had been summoned by President Wilson to direct the mobilization of America's food resources, Hoover wrote to the Spanish Ambassador in London and the Minister in Brussels, calling their attention to the unsatisfactory situation and urging them to expedite the establishment of the new committee.

DOCUMENT NO. 493

Telegram, Hoover to C.R.B., Rotterdam, *outlining plans of reorganization agreed to by British Government*

London, 4 April 1917

Relief Commission, Rotterdam

In order to secure efficient neutral governmental support in the protection of the relief, following plan has been settled with British Government and will be proposed by Townley to Villalobar and Dutch, that is:

In first instance, C.R.B. will continue purchase and shipment, including management of Rotterdam office, and control of inland shipping to Belgium and Northern France lighter terminals as at present, delivering there to C.N. and C.F. Under no circumstances can Gray stay in Belgium and we propose that Baetens should act as representative of C.R.B. in Brussels, co-operating with C.N. in shipping, exchange of accounts, settlement of bills of lading, etc., as previously. A new committee to be created to be called the Comité Neutre pour la Protection du Ravitaillement, under the direct patronage of the Spanish and Dutch Governments or their Ministers and Ambassadors. This Committee to have two Chairmen resident in Brussels, one Dutch and one Spanish, and to have combined Dutch and Spanish delegates, the Dutch Chairman having the special charge

of the Belgian Etapes and North of France while the Spanish Chairman to have special charge of Occupation Zone, the two to co-operate on general policy and themselves to settle the distribution of their subordinate staffs in conjunction with their Patron Ministers, they also to maintain a Dutch Director in Holland and a Spanish Director in London. The chairmen and directors to be selected by their respective Governments. The functions of the new committee will be to carry on the Bureau of Inspection and Control, to assist the local committees generally, to carry on the protection of the guarantees, procuring lighter passes, etc., in fact, all the negotiations with the German authorities in protection of the relief, but not to have anything to do with the commercial or distribution side of the work. The Dutch Director in Holland to be the go-between from you to the German authorities in Holland, and the Spanish Director in London to be go-between for us with London. In other words, the whole of the procuring, delivery and distribution of supplies will rest in the hands of the C.R.B., the C.N., and the C.F., whereas the whole of the protective measures under which the above Committees will operate will be carried on by the new Comité de Protection. Hope you will help get this carried through quickly.

HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 494

Letter, BALFOUR TO MERRY DEL VAL, *concerning plan for reorganization of the C.R.B.*

FOREIGN OFFICE, LONDON
6 April, 1917

His Excellency Señor Don Alfonso Merry del Val

MY DEAR AMBASSADOR:

1. In view of certain unforseen difficulties which have arisen in regard to the appointment of the neutral delegates who are to replace the Americans in Belgium and Northern France, I venture to suggest to Your Excellency the following proposals for the reorganisation of the Relief Commission, which I trust will meet with Your Excellency's approval.

2. I think we are all agreed that the economic work of the Relief organisation should be carried on by the present executive management without alteration. It therefore seems clear that the existing Commission for Relief in Belgium, under its present management, should remain responsible for delivering supplies to the various terminals in Belgium and Northern France, where they will be handed over to the Comité National and the Comité Français as at present. The accounting and other machinery of these committees would continue on their present basis without alteration. In order to facilitate this accounting and shipping, it is suggested that the Commission for Relief in Belgium should maintain a shipping and accounting office in Brussels, using Belgians or other staff of its own appointment. I understand that the present directors of the Com-

mission anticipate no difficulty in continuing a Belgian staff at Brussels which will be able to carry out these duties and to correspond with the Commission's office at Rotterdam.

3. Your Excellency will observe that this only covers the purely economic activities of the organisation. For the purpose of protecting the Relief and discharging the responsible international work, which is the most difficult and vitally important part of the business, I would suggest that a new committee should be set up under some such name as the "Comité Neutre de Protection du Secours," under the patronage of the King of Spain and the Queen of Holland, the duties of patronage being discharged by the Ambassadors and Ministers of Spain and Holland in Brussels, London, Paris, and Berlin. The functions of this committee will be the maintenance of (1) all undertakings and guarantees given by the various belligerents, and (2) free communication.

4. The first function includes all the guarantees in force in the occupied territory, especially the protection of the Belgians and French employed in the Relief and the enforcement of the German undertakings not to commandeer or export native foodstuffs and to supply fixed quantities of certain commodities to the populations of the Belgian Etappengebiet and the North of France. The Committee would of course have to furnish information, as in the past, to the various governments as to the carrying out of these guarantees, and would have to manage for this purpose the large organisation in Belgium called the Department of Inspection and Control.

5. The second function will include adequate provision for the transmission of the reports of the local committees throughout Belgium, the enforcement of the agreements covering transportation, and the regular transmission of accounts and other documents both inside and outside the occupied territories. The Committee would also have to provide for the issue of safe-conducts for oversea shipping and also for the lighters, etc., in the occupied territories.

6. I would suggest that this neutral committee should be headed by two chairmen, one of Spanish and one of Dutch nationality. They might either work together in all matters, or they might each assume special responsibility for one part of the work. In the latter case, I would suggest that the Spanish Chairman might take responsibility for the Belgian "Zone of Occupation" under civil government, while the Dutch Chairman should supervise the Northern part of France and the Belgian Etappengebiet. In any case, they would naturally act jointly in all matters of general policy. It would also be advisable that the Committee should maintain a representative or director in Holland of Dutch nationality and one in England of Spanish nationality to attend to the protective measures. The Committee would also appoint representatives in the United States or other countries as the patrons may find necessary in order to provide adequately for the regular issue of safe-conducts, etc.

7. Your Excellency will, I think, agree that the staff of delegates in Belgium and Northern France should be of both nationalities and should be chosen by the chairmen. They will probably have to be salaried. As the managers of the Commission for Relief in Belgium

have in the past set up the standard in their Belgian staff of having no men of mercantile training or affiliation and have chosen their entire staff from men of university, professional, or public service categories, with a view to avoid any possible questions of self-interest, it would seem desirable that the same type of men should be chosen by the chairmen of the new Committee. Indeed, the Dutch delegates already chosen for Northern France are men of this type. The men employed in Northern France must be able to speak German as well as French, and the men in Belgium must all speak French.

8. I feel that the above proposals form the simplest solution of the problems involved in the appointment of new delegates, more especially as, under these proposals, the neutral governments and representatives will be relieved of the very heavy financial responsibilities entailed by the expenditure of the very large sums of money advanced by the Allied Governments. These responsibilities will continue to be borne by the old organisation of the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

9. I am telegraphing these proposals to His Majesty's Minister at The Hague for discussion with the Netherland Government and the Marquis de Villalobar.

Believe me,
My dear Ambassador,
Yours sincerely

(Signed) A. BALFOUR

DOCUMENT NO. 495

Note, CAMBON TO POLAND, *giving French observations on proposed reorganization*

FRENCH EMBASSY, LONDON
13 April 1917

On the whole, the project of reorganization arranged by Mr. Hoover with the British Government does not give rise to any objection on the part of the French Government.

Mr. Ribot, however, would prefer for the new Committee another title than the one indicated, for instance, "Comité neutre pour la protection du ravitaillement des pays envahis" [Neutral Committee for the Protection of the Ravitaillement in the Invaded Countries], or "Comité neutre pour la protection de l'oeuvre d'assistance aux pays envahis" [Neutral Committee for the Protection of the Relief Work in the Invaded Countries], the title of "secours" seeming improper. Further, it would seem preferable that the two presidents of the neutral Committee should work in common. It would be of great importance that their relation to the C.R.B. be specified, in order to avoid any misunderstanding in this respect. Also, will not Mr. Hoover's departure bring about a rearrangement of the C.R.B.? Who will be his successor? What has become of the plan of assigning Allied directors to be attached to the Director-General?

The French Government has no other observations to make in

regard to the project of reorganization on which it has been approached by the British Government.

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 496

Letter, Swiss Minister in London, to Hoover, *suggesting the appointment of Swiss delegates in Belgium*

Swiss Legation, London
13 April 1917

The Commission for Relief in Belgium
London

Monsieur le Directeur:

The philanthropic and eminently useful work created by the United States of America for the assistance of the civil population of Belgium and the occupied portions of France has continued, on the spot, since the departure of the American delegates, under a Spanish-Dutch Commission. Without wishing to interfere in the action undertaken by this latter Commission, Switzerland would, however, be very glad to be allowed to co-operate in its work and would attach some value to the fact if four or five delegates of Swiss nationality could be associated with them.

The Spanish Government, approached in this regard, has already replied that they would with pleasure accept this co-operation. The British Government for its part, through the medium of Lord Robert Cecil, whom I met today, expresses a similar opinion. Lord Robert Cecil, however, considers, and I share his opinion, that it would be necessary to obtain the consent of your Commission. I have therefore the honor to request you to inform me if the Commission for Relief in Belgium, for its part, would find any objection to Switzerland's being represented by some Swiss delegates in the membership of the Spanish-Dutch Commission [Commission Hispano-Néerlandaise] at present functioning in Brussels.

Thanking you in advance for an agreeable and if possible immediate reply on this subject, I beg to express, Monsieur le Directeur, the assurances of my most distinguished consideration.

(Signed) Carlin
Swiss Minister

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 497

Letter, Hoover to Minister Carlin, *replying to above*

London, 14 April 1917

His Excellency Monsieur Gaston Carlin
Swiss Minister, London

Your Excellency:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 13th April. So far as the Commission is concerned I should be delighted to have the participation

of the Swiss people in Belgium. The situation at the present moment is, however, somewhat obscure as we are endeavoring to create a new committee to be called the Comité Neutre de Protection du Secours, and have suggested that two chairmen should be chosen, to act jointly, one of Dutch nationality and the other of Spanish. As yet its form of organization has not been completed, but as quickly as it is on its feet I will communicate with you and recommend the kindly offer which you have made.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 498

Letter, PERCY TO POLAND, *quoting substance of telegram from British Minister at The Hague, regarding difficulties in organizing the Spanish-Dutch co-operation in Belgium*

FOREIGN OFFICE, 14 April 1917

W. B. Poland, Esq.
London

DEAR MR. POLAND:

With reference to our conversation on the telephone this afternoon, I should like to communicate to you the substance of a telegram which we have received from The Hague. This telegram was dispatched on April 12th.

The French and Belgian Ministers foresee great difficulties in the smooth working of the proposed scheme for the reorganisation of the Relief Commission. It appears that when the Marquis de Villalobar was at The Hague, he told them that he would abandon the whole business if a Dutch director were appointed, and even showed a telegram from Madrid approving his determination to do so. The proposal that there should be a Spanish as well as a Dutch Chairman —with which idea the Marquis expressed his concurrence to Sir Walter Townley whilst strongly urging the retention at Brussels of Mr. Gray—seems to have altered the situation.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs at The Hague has chosen a man to be Dutch Chairman who appears to be most unsuitable for the post, and the French Minister thinks it would be better to return to the idea of M. Van Vollenhoven, and suggests the appointment of a Spaniard in London.

I should be very glad to receive your views on this subject at the earliest possible moment.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) MARY ROBBERDS
(for Lord Eustace Percy)

DOCUMENT NO. 499

Letter, Hoover to Merry del Val, *urging that the formation of the Spanish-Dutch Committee be expedited*

London, 17 April 1917

His Excellency Señor Don Alfonso Merry del Val
Ambassador of Spain in London

Your Excellency:

As some time has now gone by since the protection of the Relief inside Belgium was handed over to the total responsibility of the Spanish and Dutch Governments, and as yet no organization has been initiated by these two Governments, I am filled with anxiety for the safety of the whole enterprise. You will recollect that by the communications between His Majesty the King of Spain and Her Majesty the Queen of Holland, it was determined that the two Governments should take over jointly the sponsorship for the Relief inside Belgium. Various plans of organization were projected, and ultimately you will recollect that on our representation all the Allied Governments accepted the principle of simple joint control between the two neutral Governments without intervention from the Allies or from the Commission for Relief in Belgium, which has now become, in effect, a belligerent institution. The lack of restraint in Belgium has already resulted in the abstraction of vast quantities of cattle and in other disturbing factors which fill us with the utmost anxiety. I do feel that the total responsibility and arrangements for execution having been handed over to the two neutral Governments, the delay on their part in having arrived at the appointment of a proper staff, seriously jeopardizes the whole work, and knowing your own keen anxiety in it I take the liberty of again raising the whole question, in the hope that you may be again able to intercede to secure expedition. You will realize that we of the Commission are now entirely helpless in the matter of administration in Belgium and that the whole responsibility to the Belgian people of continuance of their supplies must rest on the Spanish and Dutch Governments, for we will not fail in delivering them to the frontier.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) Herbert Hoover

DOCUMENT NO. 500

Telegram, Hoover to Villalobar, *urging the establishment of the Spanish-Dutch organization*

London, 19 April 1917

Marquis Villalobar
Spanish Embassy, The Hague

I am directed to come to Washington and shall be leaving soon for that destination. It does appear to me that the critical thing in the Relief is to get Spanish-Dutch protective Committee erected and in operation at once, as the taking of cattle and other evidences of

German encroachment on guarantees are causing greatest possible disturbance amongst Allied Governments and it appears to me that you should secure the appointment of a Spanish gentleman of importance and character as chairman, jointly with Dutch gentleman of same qualifications, who will between them select their various delegates and get the machine going in Belgium. We do not wish to impose our views, but think one chairman should deal with Étape and Northern France so as to hold all dealings with staff in one hand, and responsibility of other to deal with Occupation Zone matters of course both under your direction. Gray positively cannot remain beyond May 1st, and in any event negotiations between him and German authorities are wholly irregular, and not countenanced by our Government. I am asking our Rotterdam office to show you copy of letter which I despatched to Ambassador Merry del Val. Generally if our ships are not torpedoed and if the interior guarantees are adhered to and an adequate protective organization is created in Belgium, there is no reason why the Relief Commission should not go on; in fact, its finance, food, and shipment possibilities are much improved by probable entrance of American Government into its financial affairs. It will be impossible for me to substantiate the Commission with the American Government who must in future furnish its finance, shipping, and foodstuffs, unless we can point to a sound and solid organization replacing C.R.B. inside Belgium. It seems to me that you, knowing the whole background of this work, are the only person who can solve the difficulties in present emergency, and that all negotiations with various parties outside your leadership are practically wasted owing to entire lack of understanding of the difficulties and requirements.

HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 501

Telegram, VILLALOBAR TO HOOVER, *replying to above and stating agreement with Hoover's proposals*

THE HAGUE, 23 April 1917

HOOVER, LONDON

Thanks your telegram, with regrets not seeing you now. Deeply sorry Gray cannot remain, but after your manifestation and my conversation here with Sir Walter Townley give up hope keeping him in Brussels and have wired to Madrid asking His Majesty's Government send adequate Spanish Director, who I hope will be able to take up work with Dutch Director within ten days. Meanwhile I beg you leave in Brussels Gray for a few days longer only, as I think it most convenient for sake everything and your own advantage that he should personally show their duties to both new directors. Your statement United States Government to find finance, food, and shipment pleases me greatly and is the best assurance for new arrangement organization. I am fully convinced that we shall be able to continue and secure all present guarantees from German authorities. Rotterdam office has given me copy of your telegram and I beg

to state that if directors have not yet been appointed by neutral Governments it is due to desire hold Gray in Brussels, as we considered that your own man was the most efficient person to continue work. I have handed to Sir Walter Townley for yourself and information Foreign Office copy of German answer to my plaint and your telegram to me in reference to last boat torpedoed in order that it reaches you sooner. Thanks for confidence you kindly place my good-will and anxiety for this work of relief. You may heartily count upon it, but nothing can be accomplished without you. Therefore I am sure that you will never fail to maintain the relief of this unfortunate country of Belgium that feels so indebted to your genius, your activity, your constant attention and interest.

VILLALOBAR

By the end of April most of the details of the new neutral committee had been settled and the Spanish and Dutch delegates were taking up their duties in Belgium and Northern France. Poland, the Commission's Director in London, who carried on the negotiations after Hoover's departure for America, drew up a statement of the duties of the new organization (eventually named Comité Hispano-Néerlandais pour la Protection du Ravitaillement de la Belgique et du Nord de la France) vis-à-vis the Commission, the Comité National, and the Comité Français, and this was approved by the British, French, Belgian, and German Governments. Gray remained in Brussels long enough to instruct the Spanish and Dutch representatives in the work which they were to perform. By the first of May all the Americans were out of Belgium and the Commission's Brussels office in charge of Baetens was in full operation.

DOCUMENT NO. 502

Letter, POLAND TO HYMANS, *announcing the Spanish and Dutch officials of the new committee*

LONDON, 28 April 1917

His Excellency Monsieur Paul Hymans
Belgian Legation, London

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

As you have undoubtedly been advised, Mr. J. E. Roura has been appointed Spanish Director of the new Comité de Protection du Ravitaillement, London. He will have offices at No. 3 London Wall Buildings.

We are just advised that Jhr. E. Michiels van Verduynen has been appointed Dutch Director Holland. He is Under Secretary at the Dutch Foreign Office and our Rotterdam office consider the choice most fortunate.

Señor Don Pedro Saura, formerly, I believe, in the Spanish consular service, Berlin, has been appointed Spanish Chairman Brussels. He is assisted by Señor Buylla and several other Spanish subjects.

Herr Langenbergh, formerly attaché at the Dutch Legation in Brussels, has been appointed Dutch Chairman.

You have further already been advised that a number of Spanish and Dutch delegates have taken on their work in Belgium and France replacing the American representatives who have retired. It therefore appears that the new neutral committee is being placed on a satisfactory basis to take over the protection of the ravitaillement in the invaded territories.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) W. B. POLAND
Director

The full name of the new Committee is:

Comité Hispano-Hollandais pour la Protection du Ravitaillement de la Belgique et du Nord de la France.

Identical letters to:
Sir Hugh Daly, Foreign Office
M. Roger Cambon, French Embassy.

Copy to:
H.E. Merry del Val

DOCUMENT NO. 503

Letter, GRAY TO FRANCQUI, *outlining the functions of the various departments of the reorganized relief machinery*

BRUSSELS, 25 April 1917

Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation
Brussels

Attention of Mr. Francqui

GENTLEMEN:

At your suggestion, and in order to place upon a firm footing the relation of the various committees occupied with the ravitaillement of Belgium, I beg to set forth our ideas of the plan of reorganization which is made necessary by the recall of the Americans in Belgium.

In order to secure efficient neutral governmental support of the relief in Belgium, a new committee has been formed called "Comité Neutre pour la Protection du Ravitaillement." This committee shall be under the direct patronage of the Spanish and Dutch Governments, or their Ambassadors and Ministers, and shall have two chair-

men resident in Brussels, one Dutch and one Spanish, with Dutch and Spanish delegates in the provinces and districts.

The Dutch chairman shall have special charge of the Belgian Étape and Northern France, while the Spanish chairman shall have special charge of the General Government in Belgium. These two chairmen shall co-operate on general policy, and shall settle, in conjunction with their Patron Ministers, the distribution of their subordinate staffs. This committee shall also maintain a Dutch Director in the Rotterdam office of the C.R.B. and a Spanish Director in the London office of the C.R.B., who will act as intermediaries in all negotiations with the German Government.

The functions of the "Comité Neutre pour la Protection du Ravitaillement" shall be to carry on the Bureau of Inspection and Control; to insure the faithful carrying out of the guarantees given by the contracting governments upon which the relief in Belgium rests; and to assist the national, provincial, and local committees when requested to do so.

The Comité National and the Comité pour le Ravitaillement du Nord de la France shall have exclusive control over all questions of accounts, rations, and distribution of imported foodstuffs. The present departments of the C.R.B. of Milling Control, Clothing, Statistics, and Automobiles shall be conducted hereafter by the Comité National.

The Commission for Relief in Belgium will continue the purchase and shipment of foodstuffs for Belgium and Northern France. They will continue the management and control of the New York, London, and Rotterdam offices and the shipment of imported merchandise to lighter and rail terminals in the Belgian provinces and the French districts.

The C.R.B. will appoint a representative in Belgium who will be responsible to them for the proper conduct of these affairs. He shall receive from the provincial delegates of the C.N. or of the C.F. receipts for the delivery of merchandise at the above-mentioned terminals, whereupon the responsibility of the C.R.B. shall cease. These goods shall be delivered in such proportions and at such places as indicated by the C.N. The representative of the C.R.B. shall send the division lists, upon which these deliveries are based and which he shall receive from the C.N., to the Rotterdam office of the C.R.B. He shall co-operate with the C.N. in all matters appertaining to his department, such as exchange of accounts, settlement of bills of lading, etc.

Carrying out this program the Commission for Relief in Belgium has today addressed a letter (copy attached) to Mr. Fernand Baetens, appointing him as their representative in Belgium, effective from May 1, 1917.

We have also addressed a similar communication to His Excellency the Marquis de Villalobar and to Mr. van Vollenhoven and have asked them, as well as yourself, to signify their approval.

Very sincerely yours

(Signed) P. N. Gray
Director

DOCUMENT NO. 504

Letter, POLAND TO CAMBON, *with an outline of the functions of the C.R.B. and the Comité de Protection under the new arrangement*

LONDON, 1 May 1917

Monsieur Roger Cambon
French Embassy, London

DEAR MR. ROGER CAMBON:

In accordance with your request, I send you herewith a memorandum outlining what we conceive to be the functions in Holland and the occupied territories of the Commission for Relief under the new arrangement, also the operations of the new Comité de Protection and its relations to the various governments and the work of the Commission. We have purposely made this rather brief—possibly you will think not brief enough. Undoubtedly, much liberty should be left to the new neutral body. On the other hand, if some fairly definite plan is not presented as approved by the interested governments, we fear that the different ideas which the various important personages concerned will have may result in almost endless discussion and lack of immediate efficiency. It is therefore suggested that if this outline meets with the approval of the French Government, in accord with the British Government, to whom I am sending a similar draft, you will present same to the Belgian Minister as the plan approved by the Governments of France and Great Britain and request that same be forwarded for the information of the Comité National. I would suggest that it also be sent to Minister Loudon, at The Hague, and to the Spanish Ambassador, London.

Will you keep us posted as to your action so that we may in turn send the necessary advice to our Director in Holland?

Yours faithfully

(Signed) W. B. POLAND
Director in Europe

PART I

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

The Rotterdam office of the C.R.B., following instructions transmitted by the London office from the interested governments, will determine the distribution of imports as between Belgium and the occupied territory of the North of France.

Commodities will be forwarded by the Rotterdam office of the C.R.B. consigned as heretofore to the C.N. or to the C.F., care of the C.N.

The Chief Representative of the C.R.B. in Brussels will continue, as at present, in accord with the C.N. and the C.F., to make reports through the Rotterdam office to the Director for Europe in London, concerning all matters in connection with the transportation and distribution of these commodities.

Financial accounts and statistics in connection with these shipments will be handled by the Brussels and Rotterdam offices of the C.R.B., and transactions will be reported as at present through the Rotterdam office to London.

The distribution of C.R.B. imports from the first unloading point within the occupied territory to final destination, will be handled, as at present, by the Provincial and District Committees of the C.N. and the C.F.

The responsibility for the protection of these imported goods, from the moment they cross the Belgian frontier, will rest with the Comité Hispano-Hollandais pour la Protection du Ravitaillement.

PART II

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COMITÉ DE PROTECTION

A. *Organization*

1. The Comité Hispano-Hollandais pour la Protection du Ravitaillement (hereinafter designated the Comité de Protection) will have, within the occupied territories, two Chairmen—one Dutch and one Spanish—resident in Brussels, and a requisite number of representatives attached to the Brussels office and to the various provinces and districts.

2. There will be a Spanish Director resident in London and a Dutch Director resident in Holland.

3. A general Department of Inspection and Control will be maintained at Brussels, on the same basis as heretofore by the C.R.B.

4. The provincial and district representatives will be members of all provincial, district, regional, and local committees within their territory. Thus they will be in touch with the processes of distribution down to the ultimate consumer. They will report weekly to the Department of Inspection and Control on all cases of violations of the guarantees of the occupying authorities as to imported goods or native foodstuffs and also to the chairmen on other matters connected with the ravitaillement.

5. The expenses of the members of the Comité de Protection and its office expenses will be paid on vouchers submitted to the chief representatives of the C.R.B. in Brussels, or to the C.R.B. Director in Rotterdam, or to the C.R.B. Director for Europe in London, on the basis heretofore established for members of the C.R.B.

B. *Responsibilities*

1. The Comité de Protection is responsible for the safeguarding of the supplies forwarded by the C.R.B. at Rotterdam from the time they cross the Belgian frontier until they have been actually distributed to the civil populations of the occupied territories. It is responsible for the suppression of all illicit traffic in commodities imported under the guarantees. Together with its Patron Ministers it is in general responsible for the carrying out of the several guarantees and undertakings of the interested governments as regards the ravitaillement.

2. Should there occur any violation of the guarantees given by the occupying authorities, the Comité de Protection is responsible for calling the attention of the proper authority to the incident in question, either directly through its chairmen or through its Patron Ministers.

3. It is particularly expected that the Comité de Protection will act with the C.N. and the C.F. in all negotiations with the occupying authorities in regard to any matters which naturally concern the ravitaillement and secours.

C. *Reports to Be Presented by the Comité de Protection*

1. It will be the office of the chairmen of the Comité de Protection to prepare weekly reports as to the protection of imports, the distribution of native products, the faithful execution of the guarantees of the occupying authorities and any protests presented or negotiations entered into concerning them. These reports will be forwarded through the director of the Comité de Protection in Holland to its director in London. The director in London will present copies of these reports to the London office of the C.R.B., to the British Government, and to the diplomatic representatives of France and Belgium in London. The director in Holland will also furnish copies of these reports to the director at Rotterdam of the C.R.B.

2. It is also expected that the chairmen, being, with their Patron Ministers, the general protectors of the ravitaillement, will, from time to time, in accord with the C.N. and the C.F., furnish the C.R.B. and the governments interested, with their reports and recommendations as to the general conditions and needs of the people of the occupied territories.

DOCUMENT NO. 505

Letter, Sir Eyre A. Crowe to C.R.B., London, *regarding the approval of the outline given above*

Foreign Office, 19 May 1917

The Secretary
The Commission for Relief in Belgium

Sir:

With reference to your letter of the 1st instant, which enclosed a copy of a letter of the same date to the French Embassy, and of a memorandum outlining the functions of the new Committee at Brussels, I am directed by Lord Robert Cecil to inform you that the memorandum has been transmitted to the Spanish Ambassador and the Netherland Minister, as accepted by the British, French, and Belgian Governments, and with a request that it may be communicated to the Spanish and Dutch Chairmen of the new Committee.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient, humble,
Servant

(Signed) Eyre A. Crowe

DOCUMENT NO. 506

Letter, ZIMMERMANN TO POLO DE BERNABÉ, SPANISH AMBASSADOR AT BERLIN, *stating the German Government's approval of the new arrangements for relief*

BERLIN, 15 June, 1917

To His Excellency M. Polo de Bernabé
Spanish Ambassador at Berlin

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

In reply to the letter which Your Excellency was good enough to address to me on the 31st May last, Belgian Affairs No. Reg. 3198, I have the honor to inform you that the Governor-General in Belgium has given his assent to the propositions contained in the note concerning the organization of the Commission for Relief in Belgium and the new "Comité Neutre pour la Protection du Ravitaillement," which Messieurs the Protecting Ministers addressed to the Baron von der Lancken Wakenitz on the 1st May last.

Please accept, Your Excellency, etc., etc., ...

(Signed) ZIMMERMANN

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 507

Letter, POLAND TO SIR HUGH DALY, *regarding final decisions of governments concerned in respect to the patrons of the new committee*

LONDON, 12 July 1917

Sir Hugh Daly
The Foreign Office, London

DEAR SIR HUGH DALY:

Confirming my recent conversation with you, I beg to advise that the slight difficulty in regard to Patrons of the Committee for Protection has now been adjusted. You will recall that there was some objection on the part of the Dutch to having the Spanish Minister at The Hague a joint Patron with the Queen of Holland. However, this has all been adjusted by withdrawing the Spanish Minister as Patron and also withdrawing the Jonkheer de Weede at The Hague, leaving as Patrons the Spanish Minister and the Dutch Minister Resident in Brussels, and the Spanish Ambassador and the Dutch Minister in London as the only active Patrons of the Committee. We have been advised that the King of Spain and the Queen of Holland have accepted the patronage of the Committee, but we assume that this is in an honorary capacity and that they should not appear upon letterheads, et cetera.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) W. B. POLAND
Director for Europe

4. *The C.R.B. and United States War Administration. January–October 1918*

Once established, the Spanish-Dutch Committee performed with devotion and skill the duties which devolved upon it in respect to belligerent guarantees and negotiations with the Germans.[15] On its part the Commission continued its established status and functions of finance, purchase and shipping at Rotterdam, London, and elsewhere without change, except that the Chairman was in Washington, where he was able to perform particularly valuable services for relief in meeting the problems of finance, shipping, and food.[16] In the face of a world shortage of ships and food and the increasing demands growing out of America's military effort, there were repeated insistent suggestions that in order to save the cause of the Allies from disaster the program of relief should be curtailed. Thanks to Hoover's position and influence in the councils of the Allies and the American Government these suggestions were never carried out, and Belgian and French relief received equal priority with war requirements. The documents which follow indicate various means employed by Hoover to guard the interests of relief through this period which in the economic sphere was the most critical of the war.

DOCUMENT NO. 508

Letter, Hoover to Francqui, *describing certain food problems and the relation of the C.R.B. to the Food Administration*

Washington, 24 January 1918

My Dear Francqui:

I am greatly obliged for your letter of late November.

Our situation when we started the Relief, was one of anxiety only as to finance; later on we added the anxiety of shipping, and now we have to add another and even greater anxiety than either of the other two—and that is the food supply.

As to the first, the American Government, at my solicitation, agreed to raise the total advances for Belgium to $9,000,000 a month, and to Northern France, to $6,000,000 a month. This was made con-

[15] This Committee's negotiations respecting the harvests are shown in chapter viii, Documents 352, 384–387.

[16] Chapter iii, Documents 109–114; chapter iv, Document 184; chapter v, Documents 243–262.

ditional upon certain sums provided by the French and English Governments. Some confusion has arisen as to the total sum of money to be raised, which I think can be cleared up. One has to bear in mind with regard to all these advances that they cannot be considered by the Governments as loans in a normal sense of probable repayment; they are practically absolute gifts to this great purpose. Furthermore, in these desperate times repayment at a thousand per cent could not compensate for the drain on national resources in furnishing such moneys.

In the matter of shipping, by one device or another we have managed, during the last few months, to get sufficient to keep the minimum ration moving. On the other hand, so many international interests supervene which delay the shipping, that it is impossible to calculate in advance any longer a precision in arrivals; nor is it possible to take an amount of shipping out of the world's total that would give a satisfactory margin of safety.

In the matter of foodstuffs, the exportable balance of wheat from America is exhausted. We have not the shipping to go to more remote markets, and all of the grain sent to Belgium is now the result of repression in consumption in the United States. You will be astonished to realize that I am now putting the American people on a practical rationing of many of the commodities most urgently needed in Europe, with a view to saving from our consumption a sufficiency to carry the Belgian Relief and to provide their essential foods.

As my department practically controls the despatch of foodstuffs from the United States, you may be assured that the Belgian Relief will have full priority in shipments. It is not possible that we can choose the exact character and condition in which foodstuffs will arrive. We must load whatever character of food we may have available at the time, and therefore you may expect to receive some shiploads of flour, some shiploads of corn, and some shiploads of wheat, but we will try to make up a total quantity sufficient for you to struggle through.

The Commission for Relief in Belgium has an office next door to mine in this department and is a matter of constant solicitude. You and I thought from time to time, in years gone by, that we had overcome almost overwhelming difficulties—I am afraid the difficulties ahead of us are even greater, but I believe by virtue of the position which I now hold that solution will be found. I am confident that were it not for the influence I am able to exert from this position, the Relief would long since have broken down. The next six months are the most difficult period that we will have to face, because every indication promises enormously increased production from the United States both of food and ships, all of which will be realizable in the last half of this year.

I cannot speak too highly of the single-minded devotion which Messrs. Poland, Honnold, Brown, Gray, Rickard, and Shaler still give to the management of the Relief work after all these years. Positions much more attractive from a public point of view have been offered

to these men, and the constancy with which they are giving this service without profit to themselves is beyond any experience that I have hitherto had in dealing with men.

I trust that you and your people may keep good courage. All that is humanly possible is being done for Belgium, and I believe that something near the present program will be carried out without failure.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 509

Letter, HOOVER TO HEMPHILL, *proposing the appointment of the Grain Corporation as agent for the C.R.B. in purchase and shipment of foodstuffs*

WASHINGTON, 27 June 1918

A. J. Hemphill, Esq., Chairman
Guaranty Trust Company, New York City

MY DEAR MR. HEMPHILL:

We have, for a long time, been having a large amount of discussion leading to the formulation of plans for co-ordination of our port handling and railway traffic, together with overseas shipment of foodstuffs. As a step in this co-ordination we have decided that the Food Administration will undertake the purchase, and convey to seaboard and storage, all cereals and cereal foodstuffs from the United States. It will thus become the sole dealer in foodstuffs for export and it will deal with exporters at the wharf and warehouse along the seaboard.

The effect of this will be a much better management of our storage and dock facilities, the ability to load ships from every source from stocks without necessity of any one shipper awaiting the arrival of special purchasers.

I am anxious that the Belgian Relief shall have a complete preference in this situation and I believe we could kill two or three birds with one stone if we constituted the Food Administration Grain Corporation as the agents of the Belgian Relief; that corporation to handle the Belgian Relief shipping and all export foodstuffs. The method would be for the Belgian Relief to make a deposit with the Grain Corporation to cover operations. The Grain Corporation would take charge of the loading and purchase and would furnish at periodic intervals an accounting to the Relief Commission. The Relief Commission would furnish to the Grain Corporation a program and place at its disposal the necessary shipping, and the Grain Corporation would practically do the rest. This would involve the transference of some departments of the Relief to the Grain Corporation.

In order to make matters smooth, I have had Honnold down and discussed the matter with him during the last day or two, and I would be glad if you and your colleagues would consider the whole project.

The Belgian Relief will be on practically an identical basis with other exporters of foodstuffs from the United States, and if we take this above step we make it absolutely sure that the Belgian Relief has priority not only on purchases but priority on berthing of ships, etc., etc., as it will be the spirit of the Food Administration to see to that end. What is more, I feel that it gives the Government a little further commitment to the Belgian Relief and I think it will ease up financial arrangements with the Treasury.

You understand of course that the Grain Corporation operates without profit and its large-scale operations will in the long run result in great economies for the Belgian Relief.

I have discussed the detailed arrangements with Honnold to show how it would work out from an organization point of view, and he will take it up with you.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 510

Letter, HOOVER TO FRANCQUI, *reviewing measures taken to insure the continuation of the full Belgian program*

WASHINGTON, 3 October 1918

Monsieur Emile Francqui
Brussels

MY DEAR FRANCQUI:

I was greatly pleased to receive your letter of early September. The situation of the Belgian Relief is a matter of anxiety at all times, but more particularly during the past six months. The movement of the gigantic American Army of three and one-half million men into Europe and the coincident necessity to feed the Allies from the United States has ofttimes introduced into the councils of all the governments the query as to whether the Belgian Relief should be sacrificed to the greater aim of the ultimate liberation of Belgium. I am happy to say that although decisions were taken adverse to us, by practically all of the governments,[17] at one time, we did, by concerted action of all of the friends of Belgium, secure a reversal of this policy.

By the conditions which we succeeded in introducing through the American Government into the negotiations for Swedish tonnage, we

[17] Document 253, chapter v.

have had assigned to us 200,000 tons of dead-weight shipping, not otherwise available in the war zone, thus placing us in a position of comparative security. In order to accomplish this, however, it was necessary for me to undertake the sacrifice of such imports as sugar and coffee into the United States in an amount that would equalize the situation. The effect of this has been loyally borne by the American population in the feeling that they were making a direct sacrifice to the Belgian people, and the small sugar and coffee allowances which the American people are receiving today are constant reminders to them of this sacrifice.

Except through such stipulations as I have made in negotiations with Holland as to the employment of their idle tonnage, there is but little hope of increasing our fleet at the present time. We have introduced every device that we could invent for the speedier operation of the boats and thus their greater aggregate carrying capacity. I have taken over the purchase of all Belgian Relief supplies and the loading of the boats by the Food Administration in order that we can give a very practical and effective priority to these ships over all other food ships, thus materially reducing delays in loading.

I have some hope that within five or six months the American ship-building program will have reached dimensions with regard to certain types of ships, that the negotiations we have instituted for the purchase of these ships from the American Government will bear fruit, and that the program will become a little more assured after that date.

The present cost of the Relief is running into huge sums, and we have, for the present at least, settled the financial necessities by the undertaking of the American Government to pay for the materials purchased in the United States on condition that the French and British Governments pay for the shipping charges of such foodstuffs as may be purchased in Europe. The food situation of the world is of course such that there is now but little hope of securing their foodstuffs otherwise than in the American market. Certain commodities obtained through England are no longer open, and it throws a rather larger load on our fleet to make the journey, than hitherto when we were obtaining some supplies from other sources.

While our harvests in North America this year are much better than last in the matter of wheat, they are much poorer in corn, and for that reason I am, for the present, substituting wheat for corn in the program, as I have the feeling that the greater food values will be obtained through wheat than through corn, despite the dislocation as to minor questions.

I am suggesting to the various governments that we directly import into Belgium oils from this country for the manufacture of soap.

I hope you will take opportunity to convey my sympathy and feeling to all those in Belgium and the devotion which the whole of the American people feel to their cause.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) Herbert Hoover

Chapter XIII

LIQUIDATION OF THE C.R.B.

1. *Problems of Liquidation*

The recovery by the Allied Armies in October and November 1918 of the French and Belgian territories so long held by the Germans did not end the Commission's service to the people of these regions.[1] There were no agencies, public or private, then in a position to take over the Commission's functions, which were, at the request of the French and Belgian Governments, continued for several months after the Armistice. No beginning was made, therefore, with the liquidation of the Commission until the two Governments were ready to assume its responsibilities. In the meantime, in order to hasten the rehabilitation of those people who had lived in destitution so long, the Commission delivered hundreds of thousands of tons of foodstuffs and clothing through the long-established relief channels. As rapidly as possible new channels that had been closed by the war were reopened. In January 1919 the Belgian port of Antwerp, so long in German hands, replaced Rotterdam as the C.R.B.'s main transshipping point for Belgium. For some time, also, the stream of supplies for Northern France necessarily flowed from the north (as during the war), for although the armies had moved on, a wide strip of devastation blocked the routes from the south. The situation in Belgium in the months immediately after the Armistice and the methods adopted by the Commission to meet this situation are indicated in the following document.[2]

DOCUMENT NO. 511

Extracts from letter, Poland to Gray, *describing the post-Armistice situation in Belgium and the work undertaken by the Commission*

London, 3 January 1919

My dear Gray:

I have just gotten back from a continuous round in Belgium and liberated France, which began on the 5th of November. From that

[1] See Documents 100 to 116, chapter iii.

[2] For the situation in Northern France at the same time, see Documents 308 and 309, chapter vi.

time on I have been only one day in London and I cannot remember spending more than three nights in succession in the same bed.

The situation following the evacuation was very bad indeed. Transport had almost completely broken down, and we none of us realized how completely the initiative of the people of the occupied territories had been crushed by four years of domination. Even those men whom we thought most resourceful and strong in standing against the Germans were for a long time almost helpless and are only now beginning to recover independence of thought and power to execute. It became absolutely necessary for the C.R.B. in Belgium to act in order that the distribution might be forced through. We were, in fact, urged by the individual members of the Government to assist their local committees in reorganization, but it was at the same time evident that they wished the impression to go out, for political purposes, that the entire feeding of the liberated region was due to the efforts of the Government. From the human point of view this was perfectly understandable, since it was evident that, unless they could win the high appreciation of the Belgian populace in such manner, they could not expect to retain office. A first natural reaction also caused the Belgians to feel that now they could act for themselves and needed no outside assistance, and that it would not be in accordance with their self-respect to have Americans in direct control of their internal ravitaillement system.

This spirit still continues, although there is an enormous and continually growing feeling of appreciation of what we have done. Personally I respect the Belgians for their attitude in this matter and entirely sympathize with them, and think it proper that we should cease to intervene in their national affairs just as soon as it is physically possible for us to withdraw.

The situation concerning ravitaillement at the moment is this: The Minister of Ravitaillement, M. Wauters (a Socialist) has taken over on the part of the Government responsibility for the carrying on of the work. He is a man of intelligence, but not very well posted on the general subject of ravitaillement and inclined not to make a move unless he knows he is right. The result is that, while matters are becoming gradually better organized, action is being taken very slowly on questions which require immediate decision.

The Comité National has consented to continue the execution of the work of ravitaillement, the responsibility, however, resting with the Ministry of Ravitaillement. . . . .

In connection with the Minister, Van Brée, Francqui, Brown, Baetens, and so forth, I went over the food situation and in accordance with the agreements with the British and French Governments prepared a new program which provides for about [3,000] calories per day, instead of the 2,000 we previously attempted to send in. This has to be modified slightly, cutting out maize for one thing, and latest corrected copy is now being forwarded to you. Our relation to the work will be that for the present we will, in accord with the Belgian Ministry of Ravitaillement, etc., determine the amount of the imports of main products to be furnished monthly. In doing this we

will obtain approval of the Allied Governments and will take into account the amount of foodstuffs which drifts into the country through private initiative. We will receive from the Comité National (for the Belgian Government) such distribution statements as will enable us to know that the proper protection is being given to the various provinces. We will no longer ask for statements of distribution to communes. Goods will be held in the name of the C.R.B. until actually turned over by Antwerp or Rotterdam through the Comité National for distribution. We will supply the ships and make purchases as heretofore.

In regard to secours we will cease to intervene except in continuing to distribute the quantities of used clothing which your Red Cross campaign in the United States is providing.[3] After our present orders have been filled, we will cease to intervene in the new clothing situation in Belgium, leaving it to Belgian Government initiative. Meanwhile, however, it is absolutely essential that the used clothing be distributed, if the people are to be clothed, as the purchase of new clothing runs into such enormous figures that I think it unlikely that the Government would be able to finance it.

On January 1st Fletcher and a small office staff were moved to Antwerp. The intention is gradually to transfer the Rotterdam office to that point, and Brown will take up residence in Antwerp . . . . about the 25th of January. The Belgians are crazy to get Antwerp put into service again and there is no reason why this should not be done as soon as the port is prepared to receive steamers, which it is not at present. The Germans had the entire place blocked with an enormous quantity of dead freight such as coal, paving blocks, immense quantities of lumber, gravel, iron carts, various sorts of heavy munitions, which must be removed before there is room to handle cargoes. We expect that the food steamers will be handled about the 15th of January, but the port will have to be put into service slowly.

On the other hand, the Food Administration expects to turn over to the C.R.B. for storage at Rotterdam over one hundred thousand tons of cargo, which for political purposes will be held in the name of the C.R.B. to be distributed later. It will therefore be necessary to maintain our Dutch office organization unless conditions change—which they are doing almost daily.

. . . . . .

Faithfully your friend
(Signed) W. B. Poland

In accordance with Hoover's plan to turn over the provisioning of the recently occupied districts to their Governments as soon as the latter were prepared to undertake it, the Commission began in May 1919 to hand over its relief vessels to a Belgian Government agency.[4] In Northern

[3] See chapter xv.

[4] See Document 116, chapter iii.

France, meanwhile, the transportation lines from the south had been repaired and the French Government was able to include these districts in its national program. These developments indicated that the Commission need no longer continue as the provisioning agency for the 9,000,000 Belgian and French people and might commence the formidable job of liquidation. The tables[5] which follow showing, first, the gross operations of the Provisioning and Benevolent Departments, and, secondly, the funds received and disbursed by the Commission, give an idea of the size of the enterprise and explain why liquidation was itself a very large undertaking. Practically all the currencies of the world entered into the financial accounting of the Commission. In order to simplify the bookkeeping the following exchange ratios were maintained during the active period of the Commission, realized differences being charged to an exchange account: $4.85 = £1 = Frs. 25.40 = Fls. 12.03. For convenience the accounting figures, originally in sterling, are converted to dollars at $4.85 in the following tables.

TABLE I.—BRIEF STATEMENT OF GROSS OPERATIONS OF THE PROVISIONING AND BENEVOLENT DEPARTMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

A. Provisioning Department. This division of the organization operated as a business enterprise in the purchase, transportation, and sale of supplies for the provisioning of the population.

OPERATING ACCOUNT. PROVISIONING DEPARTMENT

Purchase value of provisions		$642,451,917.81
Transport expense		165,239,023.32
Total provisions		$807,690,941.13
Charges on 20,000,000 rations supplied in Belgium through British Army	$ 4,377,650.26	
Overhead and administration[6] (entire organization)	3,908,892.74	
Total charges		$815,977,484.13

[5] Complete statistical analyses of commodity and financial figures as well as a brief description of the method of administration and operation are given in Gay, *Statistics*.

[6] The total overhead and administration expense of the entire operation, including a large burden of the cost of administration of allied and associated appeal committees, totaled $3,908,892.74, or 0.43 per cent of the total cost of operations. On the other hand, a profit of over $9,600,000 was earned on extraordinary transactions entirely outside of Belgium and France. The overhead expense was paid for out of this profit and the substantial balance became available for benevolence in Belgium and Northern France.

Surplus on sales, including profits on transactions entirely outside Belgium and France (available for benevolence)	$111,704,000.95
Total operations, Provisioning Department	$927,681,485.08

B. Benevolent Department. The function of this department was the care of the destitute.

Benevolent Account. Benevolent Department

World charity	$ 52,290,835.51
Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation profits transferred to Commission for benevolence	23,933,542.26
Provisioning Department surplus transferred	111,704,000.95
Total available for benevolence	$187,928,378.72

Table II.—Summary of Funds Received and Funds Disbursed by the Commission

Funds Received by Commission

A. Government Subsidies (advanced as loans to Belgium and France)		
1. Through United States Treasury	$386,632,260.44	
2. Through British Treasury	109,045,328.73	
3. Through French Treasury	204,862,854.21	
Total Government Subsidies	$700,540,443.38	78.4%
B. World Charity		
1. From United States	$ 34,521,026.99	
2. From British Empire	16,641,034.85	
3. From General Sources	1,128,773.67	
Total World Charity	$ 52,290,835.51	5.8%
C. Commercial Exchange		
Remittances to individuals in Belgium	$ 6,328,328.30	0.7%
D. Operating Surplus and Profit[7]		
Available for benevolence	$135,637,543.21	15.1%
Grand Total Funds Received	$894,797,150.40	100.0%

[7] The surplus and profit are the result of a marginal charge made to cover equalization of prices, war destruction, fluctuations in exchange, and to support, through the Benevolent Department, the destitute. They also reflect the volunteer service of members of the Commission, and the concessions and special privileges granted to the Relief Commission by individuals and by railway, steamship, telegraph, insurance, and brokerage companies all over the world.

FUNDS DISBURSED BY COMMISSION

I. BELGIUM

A. Goods supplied and expenditure incurred	
To the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation	$557,201,132.57
B. Cost of 20,000,000 rations	
Supplied by the C.R.B. through the British War Office	4,377,650.26
C. Commercial exchange	
Remittances to individuals in Belgium	6,328,328.30
D. C.R.B. benevolence	
Gifts of cash and clothing	48,511,734.00
E. Refund of working capital to the United States Treasury	
As reduction of loans to Belgium (£383,013 at $4.85. Current rate at repayment was $3.95)	1,857,613.43
Total funds disbursed on Belgian account	$618,276,458.56

II. FRANCE

A. Goods supplied and expenditure incurred	
1. To the Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France	$216,033,665.27
2. To the Comité Général de Ravitaillement des Régions Libérées	16,017,195.20
B. C.R.B. benevolence	
Gifts of cash and clothing	21,226,073.42
C. Refund of working capital to the United States Treasury	
As reduction of loans to France (£4,366,200 at $4.85. Current rate at repayment was $3.95)	21,176,070.00
Total funds disbursed on French account	$274,453,003.89

III. NORTHERN RELIEF

Clothing distributed through the American Relief Administration	$ 2,067,687.95
Grand total funds disbursed	$894,797,150.40

2. *Procedure of Liquidation*

Beginning with the first weeks of its life in 1914 and throughout the entire five years of its existence the Commission issued weekly and monthly financial statements and periodical reports concerning the relief work. These were submitted to its diplomatic sponsors, to the interested governments, and distributed widely to the public. As the following documents show, Hoover had, at an early date, secured precise definitions of the Commission's responsibilities and official approval of its accounting methods from the governments concerned. The conditions of war made it extremely difficult to present complete accounting statements of the vast enterprise at specific dates prior to the termination of relief shipments, but on the 10th May 1919 Hoover laid before the Belgian and French Governments his proposals for the liquidation of the Commission's financial accountability to these Governments. This was a restatement of principles that had already been agreed upon, and both Treasuries gave their formal assent.

DOCUMENT NO. 512

Memorandum, by Hoover for Van de Vyvere, *regarding the financial responsibility*[8] *of the C.R.B. for funds received for relief in Belgium*

London, 15 July 1916

1. The responsibility for moneys expended by public subscription and commercial exchange and their expenditure are exclusively upon the C.R.B. and C.N.

2. The Belgian Government accepts the principle that their monthly subsidy constitutes a remittance through the C.R.B. to the C.N. for expenditure on the "Secours Extraordinaire" for the purposes listed in the Provisional Accounts of May 31 (No. 57) and such additional purposes as may be authorized from time to time by the Belgian Government.

3. The Belgian Government accepts the principle that the C.R.B. is completely discharged of all responsibility to the Belgian Government by a certificate of Messrs. Deloitte, Plender, Griffiths and Company, that the subsidies of the Belgian Government had been paid to the C.N. and any balances so unpaid to be refunded to the Belgian Government in cash by the C.R.B. or in goods at cost.

[8] The agreement of December 1916, Document 63, chapter ii, approved by the Allied Governments, covered the entire question of administration and financial responsibility.

4. The Belgian Government to hold the C.N. responsible for the expenditure of the various departments of the "Secours Extraordinaire" until they have had an opportunity to satisfy themselves after the war.

5. The Belgian Government insists that the profits of the C.R.B. and the C.N., while in part the result of volunteer service, are also in part due to profit on exchange; and the Belgian Government agrees that that part which is due to volunteer service may be expended by the C.R.B. and C.N. for any purpose to the benefit of the Belgian people upon which the C.R.B. and C.N. may agree.

6. The Belgian Government insists that that portion of the profits which is due to exchange shall be accounted for to the Belgian Government. In respect, however, of the profits made on exchange, these are to be calculated as being the difference between the standard rate of the C.R.B. and C.N. of Frs. 25.40 and the average rate month by month of the exchange of French currency in London, and to be determined by Messrs. Deloitte, Plender, Griffiths and Company, whose statement shall be final.

7. It is agreed that the C.R.B. and the C.N. may at once expend the profits from exchange upon "Secours Ordinaire" and may reserve the profits arising from volunteer service until after the profits from exchange have been so expended and that any balance which they may have so unexpended they may make use of as in (5) and that a certificate from Messrs. Deloitte, Plender, Griffiths and Company, that such exchange profits have been so expended upon the "Secours Ordinaire" shall be a final discharge of all responsibility of the C.R.B. and the C.N. any unexpended balance of the profits from exchange to be refunded to the Belgian Government in cash.

DOCUMENT NO. 513

Extract of Memorandum[9] *of August (1916) conferences in Paris between Hoover and the representatives of the French and Belgian Governments regarding the financial responsibility of the C.R.B. for French relief*

PARIS, 28 August 1916

. . . . . .

G. The Commission proposes to introduce certain laws in regard to accounts in the North of France, and to impose certain obligations as regards payments to be made by the communes or the municipalities; these rules and obligations shall have received the approval of the French Government.

[9] Full memoranda of these conferences are given as Document 295, chapter vi. All Hoover's recommendations had the approval of the individual members of the French Government present at these conferences. The French Government, however, never gave its direct approval so long as the war lasted. See also Documents 268, 289, 291, 292, and 293, chapter vi.

DOCUMENT NO. 514

Memorandum, HOOVER TO BELGIAN AND FRENCH TREASURIES, *describing the methods by which the Commission was financed and requesting official approval of the form of the final financial accounts which he proposed to submit*

PARIS, 10 May 1919

I

This Commission was founded in October 1914 as a voluntary agency for the relief of the civil populations of Belgium and Northern France. Its accounts have been kept from the beginning by Messrs. Deloitte, Plender, Griffiths and Company, of London, this firm furnishing the accounting or auditing personnel in London, New York, and Rotterdam.

It has been impossible to make complete accounting during the war, owing to the obvious difficulties of communication over belligerent lines, and it has been considered wise since the Armistice not to attempt to draw up a completed statement until the activities of the Commission have been brought to an end. All buying of foodstuffs ceased on May first and deliveries will be complete by June first, and within two or three months thereafter absolutely completed accounts can be presented. The benevolent activities of the Commission will continue.

The Commission was founded initially on the basis of public benevolence, but, with the accruing task, it has built up its resources from many different directions. That is:

a) Public Charity; free, or partially free, service of individuals, railways, shipping companies, etc.; profits realized on the sale of goods to others than Belgians and French—"external profits"; profits earned on goods sold to the populations of Belgium and Northern France—"internal profits."

b) Commercial exchange.

c) Advances made to the Belgian Government from the British, French, and American Treasuries for transmission to the Commission; advances made by the French Treasury to the Belgian Government for transmission to the Commission to be used in the support of the occupied French population; advances from the French Treasury to the Commission; advances from the United States Treasury to the French Treasury for the purpose of the Commission; advances from the Belgian Treasury to the Commission; advances from the British Treasury to the Commission.

II

The theory of our operations was set out in writing to the French and British Governments some three years ago and approved by them. It is as follows:

1. While most goods have been bought in common, they are capable of separation upon the books as between Belgium and France, as are also the special expenditures internally in Belgium for ac-

count of French refugees and local Belgian produce shipped to Northern France, etc.

2. The accounts have been in Sterling and all moneys remitted to England were taken into the books at the actually realized exchange. All inter-office accounting of non-remitted moneys was carried in the books at a fixed exchange, values were established of 25.40 francs and $4.85 and guilders 12.03 equal to £1 Sterling, and any gains—or losses—in exchange were debited to "exchange account."

3. Benevolent contributions other than cash were taken into the books at valuation by the directors.

4. The cost of supplies was carried in the books as "purchase," "transport," and "administration," each cargo being accounted for separately and vouchers can be produced for each different shipment quantitatively and in expenditure.

5. On shipment of supplies from the ports of entry, they were debited to the interior committees at flat round prices, and their accepted quantitive bills of lading secured, thus enabling proof that supplies reached the interior committees.

Imports of supplies were during the occupation all virtually debited against the Comité National Belge for both Belgium and France, this committee in turn debiting the French portion against the Comité du Nord de la France and furnishing the C.R.B. acknowledgments thereof together with supplies and payments to French refugees in Belgium which the Comité National Belge was authorized by the C.R.B. to expend for the Comité Français. After the Armistice the Comité Français was reorganized into the Comité du Ravitaillement and debited direct by the C.R.B. The accounts of these interior committees were audited by the C.R.B. accountants.

6. The prices debited against the interior committees for food were calculated to show a small margin of "profit," and were carried at the same prices for long periods, adjustments being made occasionally to meet general trends of rising or falling costs. This "profit" margin was installed for several purposes:

a) To enable immediate accounting with interior committees without waiting months for full cost determinations of cargoes due to lag in accounts from North and South America, India, disputes on values, out-turns, etc.

b) To maintain steady food prices in the interior over long periods.

c) To interpret the free services received, the prices charged against interior committees being on average less than could have been secured by commercial means, by virtue of total elimination of middlemen and free service secured.

d) To create a fund to be used toward liquidation of exchange losses.

7. The benevolent receipts from the exterior world, together with "profits" were allotted by the directors to various interior committees from time to time for charitable purposes.

8. The Commission invited remittances to Belgium, investing the money in food and delivering to the payee the local currencies re-

ceived in resales. Allocations of benevolence and profits to local committees were carried out practically as commercial exchange to the committee concerned.

III

The public and the different governments are vitally interested in the final accounting of the Commission, because:

a) The public must have evidence of faithful trusteeship.

b) The Belgian and French Governments have a right to know that the sums of money entrusted by them to the Commission have been duly expended in the purchase and delivery of foodstuffs and for the care of their nationals.

c) The American Government is interested because, as it has subsequently proved, the Commission has overdrawn from the American Treasury during the last few months, and stocks have accumulated which are now being liquidated into cash. This cash is, in accordance with the understanding of the American Government, returnable to the American Treasury. This accumulation of stocks has arisen from the necessity of the Commission to place shipping and foodstuffs in motion three months in advance, and during the last few months the infiltration of food from commercial and other sources into the liberated areas has reduced the call upon the Commission for supplies, thus building up balances.

The American Treasury has every right to a refund by the Commission of such balances, the amounts refunded to be applied, respectively, to the cancellation of Belgian and French obligations.

IV

In order to accomplish these various objectives, the Commission proposes (*a*) that the Treasuries should approve the basis set out below for the formulation of the accounts of the Commission, and (*b*) that the Belgian, French, and American Treasuries should each agree to appoint a delegate to receive and approve the statement when presented. Mr. Keynes has stated that the British Treasury is not interested.

V

The principle of accepting the auditor's statements as final discharge of the Commission has already been accepted by the French and Belgian Governments. The following is the form in which it is proposed to present the final statement and liquidation.

The Commission should provide a statement of accounts from the auditors showing:

a) The sums expended for the purchase, transportation and administration of the relief.

b) The debits acknowledged by the different interior committees for the supplies and reserves delivered to those bodies and sums expended in Belgium for French refugees.

c) Amount of advances received either directly or indirectly from the various governments.

d) A statement showing the cash balances from government advances in the hands of the Commission and to whose credit (Belgian or French) such balances shall be refunded at the American Treasury.

e) The amounts contributed for charity in cash or in kind; the profits from the sales of foodstuffs to other than the populations of Belgium and Northern France; the profits earned on the sale of foodstuffs to the interior committees; the whole of these being the charitable aspects of the Commission; to be accompanied by acknowledged statements as to the purposes to which these sums have been applied in charity. Further, the balance of such charitable sums which may be decided by the Commission as unappropriated and applicable to the subsequent charitable operations now being continued by the Commission.

It is, of course, proposed that such balances should be appropriated for the benefit of the populations in Belgium and Northern France as shall be determined by the Commission and the internal committees.

f) Although overseas supplies were brought in as undivided cargoes for Belgium and Northern France, the costs and deliveries can be accurately separated except for administration, exchange, and a few items that must be pro-rated. The accounts will show that proportion of supplies provided by the particular government advances was delivered, respectively, to the Belgian and the Northern France committees; this includes supplies to France from Belgium and the expenditures on refugees. It has not been possible under the conditions of non-communication to more than attune these streams of supplies and support of two different nationals to the two different sources of government finance. It is proposed to show in the statement how much money may be owed by Belgium to France or vice versa on balance, and that such statement will be binding upon the two Treasuries as a basis of settlement of accounts between them.

g) As the great volume of operations carried on government account entail a larger number of disputed accounts it may require six months for final liquidation. In order to get a major settlement at an early date it is proposed to set aside a sum estimated to cover the minor items that may be outstanding. The disposal of any final residuum of such a reserve can be determined by the representative of the three Treasuries.

(Signed) Herbert Hoover, *Chairman*

DOCUMENT NO. 515

Letter, Delacroix to Comité National, *agreeing on the part of the Belgian Government to Hoover's proposals relative to the form of final accounts and to the method of closing them*

Brussels, 16 July 1919

To the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation, Brussels

Replying to yours of June 26 last, I have the honor to inform you that I agree to the proposals of Mr. Hoover, President of the C.R.B.,

relative to the form of the final accounts of this organization and the method of closing them.

According to your suggestion I appoint to verify these accounts in agreement with certified accountants chosen by the United States Government, Mr. Fortin, Councillor at the Court of Accounts.

Receive, I beg you, etc.

The Prime Minister

(Signed) Leon Delacroix

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 516

Letter, L. L. Klotz, French Minister of Finance, to Poland, *agreeing on the part of the French Treasury to Hoover's method of presenting the accounts of the Commission with comments on the balance of French advances and on allocation of profits*

Paris, 17 July 1919

W. B. Poland
Director of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, Paris

Dear Sir:

You were good enough to address to me a note by the President of the Commission for Relief in Belgium on the operations of the Commission as well as on the necessity of proceeding to the liquidation of accounts and their examination for approval by the interested governments. He asked me to inform you if the method of presentation of these accounts which was set out in this note had the approval of the French Government.

The operations of the Commission are coming to a close since all the purchases of foodstuffs stopped on the 1st of May, and all deliveries should have terminated by the 1st of June. Mr. Hoover therefore proposes to close the accounts and to designate delegates of the Belgian, French, and American Treasuries (the British Treasury having declared that they did not think it necessary to intervene) to receive and approve the accounts of the Commission.

The accounts will be presented in such a way as to show (1) the advances received by the Commission directly or indirectly by the various governments; (2) the expenses of purchase, transport, and administration; (3) the sums which the interior committees of Belgium and North of France recognize as owing for the delivery of merchandise; (4) the balance in cash remaining from these advances; (5) the operations in regard to the charitable side of this work, that is to say, (*a*) gifts in cash or in kind made to the Commission (*b*) the profits realized by the Commission on the sales either to the interior committees or to persons other than the populations of Belgium and the North of France (both these items constitute the

resources on the charitable side of this work), (*c*) the use which has been made of these resources under the title of benevolence, (*d*) the balance not yet distributed of the sums received intended for this use; (6) the amounts which are owing one to the other at the close of operations by the C.R.B., the French Government and the Belgian Government.

A sum will be set aside from the balance on hand for the liquidation of outstanding items. It may require six months for final liquidation.

Mr. Hoover proposes to determine immediately the allocation of the available balances remaining on the different accounts.

A distinction will be made in accordance with the origin of the available funds and according as these funds arise from advances by the governments or resources realized from charitable donations or profits.

1. The credit balances of the account on advances will be turned over to the American Treasury for the reduction of the debts of Belgium and France.

2. The unallocated funds arising also from the profits realized from gifts received by the Commission will remain at the disposal of the Commission to be distributed by them in the form of benevolence to the populations of Belgium and the North of France after agreement between the Commission and the internal committees of France and Belgium.

Before replying to the proposals contained in the note of the C.R.B., I make it my duty, and it is a particularly agreeable one, to express my gratitude to the Commission for its generous initiative, its inexhaustible labor, the inexpressible services rendered to the populations of the invaded territories and to France.

The settlement suggested by Mr. Hoover has been the subject of my most attentive examination, and I can only agree to the proposals of the Commission concerning the method of presenting the accounts and the constitution of the Commission composed of delegates from the various interested treasuries.

As regards the method of employment of the remaining balances available, I believe I should submit to you the following observations:

1. Allocation to the American Treasury of the balances on account of advances.

I agree that the unused balance of the sums placed at the disposal of the C.R.B. by the French Treasury should not be returned, but should on the contrary be paid to the French Treasury. However, I do not think it possible to decide at this time that only the advances granted by the American Government to the French Government should be reduced by the total value of this balance; in consequence of the participation of the British Government in the operations of the C.R.B., it may arise that the British Treasury may have the right to demand that a portion of this balance should be employed to reduce their own debt vis-â-vis the American Treasury, unless, of course, the British Treasury wishes to reduce by that same amount, its credits to the French Government.

I can therefore only agree, for the moment, to the principle of turning in the balance to the American Treasury in reduction of its loans.

2. In regard to the free funds arising from gifts and profits realized both on the sales and on operations in exchange, I consider that a distinction should be made between gifts and profits.

I am entirely in agreement with the C.R.B. that the gifts should remain at the disposition of the C.R.B., which will employ them as far as the French share is concerned, in charitable works in the former occupied regions, after agreement between the Commission and the Comité du Nord de la France, under this reserve, however, that for the Comité du Nord de la France might be substituted the organizations which have replaced it; on this point the Ministry of Liberated Regions can be usefully consulted.

On the other hand, it does not appear to me possible to make a similar decision as regards the profits realized by the C.R.B., as long as I do not know the exact amount of these profits. They should really normally be employed for the reduction of the budgetary charges which the French state will have to support, because of the insufficiency of the resources of the Comité du Nord de la France to cover the expenses of the ravitaillement. The French Treasury, before renouncing these profits to the benefit of the liberated regions, which would benefit from them in the form of charitable organizations, should obviously know beforehand the exact amount.

I should be obliged if you would submit these few remarks to Mr. Hoover and to inform me of the objections and difficulties which my proposals on these points may bring up, where they differ from those of the C.R.B.

I attach a particular value, in this precious work of collaboration with the C.R.B., that there should be a complete agreement between us.

Believe me, dear Sir,

(Signed) KLOTZ

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 517

Letter, HOOVER TO KLOTZ, *in answer to the preceding*

PARIS, 19 July 1919

M. Klotz
Ministre de Finance, Paris

DEAR M. KLOTZ:

ACCOUNTING OF COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM

In Mr. Poland's absence, I beg to reply to the observations in your letter of the 17th instant.

As to the first point, Mr. Keynes informed Mr. Norman Davis and myself that the British Government has no interest whatever in the settlement of C.R.B. accounts beyond payment for certain purchases in England which are in course of liquidation.

As to the second point, regarding any remaining "profits" on charges against North of France committees, you will, of course, realize that the great bulk of this item has already been allocated to the committees in the north for purposes approved by the various French authorities, and expended by them. The amounts remaining, which may develop in final accounts, will be comparatively a minor portion in the whole. The amount will be, of course, set out in the final accounts.

The other minor item of "profits" earned upon operations outside those to North of France Belgian committees, we propose to treat as gifts.

I wish to thank you for your kind expressions. The four years of so intimate association and co-operation with Frenchmen, under circumstances of unparalleled trial, have given us a high sense of appreciation of those great qualities of mind and character which so distinguish your countrymen. In retiring from this unique relationship, I wish to express again our feeling of unlimited admiration and the obligation that we feel for the privilege of its association.

Faithfully yours

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

No successful enterprise of huge dimensions can terminate its operations abruptly without leaving in the hands of its liquidators considerable assets. In the case of the C.R.B. these were mainly attributed to the necessarily large working capital. That this condition would exist at the cessation of shipments had been realized by those concerned in the Commission's work, and the two Governments in approving Hoover's proposals of May 1919[10] were well aware of the nature of the sums involved. As far as the Governments were concerned, there would undoubtedly be a considerable balance of unused working capital to be returned to them in reduction of their subsidies to the Commission. The public at large was interested in the "benevolent" funds and the unexpended balance of these funds. This balance (to be determined by complete analysis of the accounts) belonged to the people of the invaded territories, and the method of returning it to them alone remained to be determined. The origin of these benevolent funds has been discussed in vari-

[10] Document 514.

ous documents,[11] but a summary here will perhaps clarify the settlement.

From its early days the Commission's administration of relief was divided into two departments, the Provisioning and the Benevolent. The Provisioning Department was in the nature of a business enterprise, which provided foodstuffs for that portion of the population which was able to pay for them. The Benevolent Department,[12] charged with the care of the destitute, saw to it that every individual was either furnished with the means to purchase food or received it through free canteens established for the purpose. The Benevolent Department was supported by public donations and by a fund which accrued to the Provisioning Department through a small marginal charge on all sales. Out of this fund the Provisioning Department made advances to the Benevolent Department from time to time. The balance of these profits still available for benevolence could not be determined until the complete closure of the business of the Provisioning Department.

By June 1920 the inevitably slow process of liquidation had reached the stage where the Commission was able to make a major settlement with both the French and the Belgian Governments. This settlement included in the first place the return of considerable sums of working capital not used by the Commission. As this money originated in United States Treasury loans to France and Belgium, it was returned to the Treasury and applied in reduction of these loans. The second part of the settlement related to the balance of benevolent funds, the so-called "profits" of the Provisioning Department. In the case of France there were comparatively small amounts available represented by the slight variation between the approximate cost prices of provisions set at the time of delivery and the precise cost to the Commission which final accounting brought out. This benevolent balance for France was sufficient, however, to

[11] See Document 63, chapter ii, also Document 514.

[12] The method of relief administration as described here applied to Belgium only. No such complete cycle was possible in Northern France. The Commission's Provisioning Department supplied the food at as near cost as possible for all of the French population, rich and poor alike, as a ration and for it accepted acknowledgment in the form of communal receipts. The benevolent aspects were left to the French Government for after-war settlement.

make possible a substantial allocation to the French districts and to constitute an important contribution to the work of the Comité de Ravitaillement and the Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées.[13] This allocation of benevolent funds was the final settlement of the Commission with the people of Northern France and the French Government. The documents which immediately follow cover the return of working capital to the United States Treasury for the account of the French and Belgian Governments as reduction of loans to these countries.

DOCUMENT NO. 518

Letter, C.R.B. TO FRENCH MINISTER OF FINANCE, *presenting the Commission's complete account to the French Government*

NEW YORK, 25 June 1920

To the Honorable The French Minister of Finance
Paris, France

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We have the honor to hand you herewith a statement of accounts between the French Government and the Commission for Relief in Belgium, showing the funds received and the disbursements which have been made by the Commission.

The balance of funds received by the Commission in excess of expenditures has been returned to the American Treasury to be credited to French Government account and your Embassy in Washington has been officially advised by the Treasury of this credit. This completes our accountability to the French Government.

The surcharges over the actual cost of supplies delivered, made by the Commission to provide against losses, equalization of prices, war destruction, and so forth, have amounted to £3,289,475. This sum has been returned to the French districts through allocations to the Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France, and to the Comité de Ravitaillements des Régions Libérées and by direct benevolent expenditures, thus closing our accountability to the people of the occupied regions.

With assurances of the highest consideration we beg to remain, dear Mr. Minister,

Faithfully yours

(Signed) EDGAR RICKARD, W.B. POLAND
Liquidators, Commission for Relief in Belgium

[13] The work of these organizations is described in Documents 310 to 313, chapter vi.

DOCUMENT NO. 519

Letter, HOOVER TO UNITED STATES TREASURY, *enclosing checks for $17,246,490 and $1,512,901.66, to be credited, respectively, to French and Belgian Government accounts, and advising that $1,000,000 has been reserved for liquidation, the residue of this to be paid eventually to the Treasury for Belgian account*

NEW YORK, 19 June 1920

Hon. Nicholas Kelley
Assistant Secretary of the Treasury
Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. KELLEY:

I confirm our agreement of yesterday that C.R.B. accounts with the Treasury are finally settled in accordance with the three statements of C.R.B. accounts which accompanied my letter to you of June 17, 1920. In accordance therewith I enclose check for $17,246,490 return of excess monies paid to us for French relief, and a check for $1,512,901.66 similar item for Belgian relief, it being the understanding that you will settle any technical questions arising with the French or Belgian Government respectively as to this direct payment to you from us.

I also confirm that the item of $2,467,626.82 dollar reimbursement is to be paid from the funds amounting to $37,431,270.30, recoveries from the resale of food as set out in the accounts furnished you, and that we hold this sum awaiting the direction of the Treasury as to the date when it shall be paid to the British Treasury, it being a part of the dollar reimbursements from C.R.B. accounts amounting to $9,199,887.26 of which the Treasury has already undertaken to pay $6,732,260.44 directly to the British Treasury for account of the Belgian Government.

I confirm our understanding that this completes all relations with the Treasury except that any residue we may have in hand after settlement of liabilities in the United States, out of the item of $1,000,000 reserved for this purpose in the accounts above mentioned, will be paid to the United States Treasury further for account of the Belgian Government.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 520

Letter, UNITED STATES TREASURY TO HOOVER, *acknowledging the preceding*

WASHINGTON, 21 June 1920

DEAR MR. HOOVER:

Your letter of the 19th instant has been received enclosing a check of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, in the amount of $17,246,490, which the Treasury understands to represent the balance of

Treasury advances made to the French Government for relief expenditures through the Commission for Relief in Belgium and not required for that purpose, and also the check of the Commission for Relief in Belgium for $1,512,901.66, which the Treasury understands to represent the balance of Treasury advances made to the Belgian Government for relief expenditures through the Commission for Relief in Belgium and not required for the purpose of the program. The Treasury will take up with the representatives of the French and Belgian Government, respectively, the disposition of these funds. I understand from our conversation of Friday that the three statements which accompanied your letter of the 17th instant set forth the final state of the account of the French Government with the Commission for Relief in Belgium and also the final state of the accounts of the C.R.B. On the basis of these statements, the Treasury understands from you that no further sums are due from the C.R.B. to either the French Government or the Belgian Government except that any residue remaining in the hands of the C.R.B. after the settlement of liabilities in the United States out of the item of $1,000,000 reserved for this purpose in the above-mentioned accounts will be paid for account of the Belgian Government. Should it later be disclosed that any further funds are available on either French or Belgian account, the Treasury assumes that they will be dealt with in the same manner as the sums represented by the checks above referred to. It is also understood that the sum of $2,467,626.82 is to be paid to the British Government out of funds to that amount held by the C.R.B. for the purpose of reimbursing the British Government for certain items mentioned in Mr. Rathbone's letter of September 4, 1919, to Mr. Rickard, and that this sum will be held by the C.R.B. awaiting the direction of the Treasury as to the date when it shall be paid to the British Treasury.

Yours very truly

(Signed) N. KELLEY

DOCUMENT NO. 521

Letter, BELGIAN EMBASSY TO UNITED STATES TREASURY, *approving on behalf of the Belgian Government that the sum of $1,512,901.66 returned by the Commission be applied in reduction of United States Treasury loans to Belgium*

WASHINGTON, 27 December 1920

Mr. N. Kelley
Assistant Secretary of the Treasury
Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. KELLEY:

By your letter of June 21, 1920, you informed me that the Treasury had received from the Commission for Relief in Belgium, One million, five hundred twelve thousand, nine hundred one dollars and sixty-six

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 20, 1915

My dear Mr. Hoover:

It was a real pleasure to receive your letter of September third. I have for a long time wanted to express to you the great admiration with which I have followed the extraordinary work that you have been doing as chairman of the Commission for Relief in Belgium. It has been a work wonderfully done and my thought has followed you very constantly in it.

I warmly appreciate your thought of me as expressed in your letter and thank you for it from the bottom of my heart.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

P. S. Thank you also most sincerely for the report which you were thoughtful enough to send me.

Mr. Herbert Hoover,
Commission for Relief in Belgium,
London, England.

LETTER, 20 SEPTEMBER 1915, PRESIDENT WILSON TO HOOVER

cents ($1,512,901.66), constituting the balance of the funds advanced by the Treasury to the Belgian Government for relief expenditure to be made through the Commission for Relief in Belgium, and which was not used or necessary for the purposes of the program. You added that the Treasury proposes to apply this sum in payment of a corresponding amount of the principal of obligations given by the Belgian Government for advances by the United States Treasury, for the purposes of relief.

After the recent interview I had with you, I have not failed to bring again your communication to the attention of my government.

I beg to inform you that I have now been advised by the Belgian Government that it agrees with the Treasury on the proposal as stated above.

I am, my dear Mr. Kelley,

Very sincerely yours

(Signed) C. Symon
The Counselor of the Embassy

DOCUMENT NO. 522

Letter, United States Treasury to Casenave, Director General of French Services in the United States, *replying to objections on the part of the French Government that the $17,246,490 representing unused balance of Commission's funds (French account) should be returned to the United States Treasury*

Washington, 9 August 1920

My dear Mr. Casenave:

Your letter of the 2nd instant (No. 2555) has been received transmitting observations of your Government regarding the sum of $17,246,490 received by the Treasury from the Commission for Relief in Belgium as being the balance of funds advanced by the United States Treasury to your Government for expenditures through the Commission for Relief in Northern France, but which was not used or necessary for that purpose.

Please convey to your Government assurances that it is my desire, to the full extent of the powers conferred upon me and within the principles heretofore established and followed by the Treasury, to co-operate with your Government and its Treasury no less sympathetically than my predecessors, the measure of whose friendly desire to exercise the powers of the American Treasury toward the assistance of your Government in accordance always, however, with sound principle and correct policy, is the course pursued by the United States Treasury, and the close and friendly co-operation between the Treasuries from the entry of the United States into the war to the present moment.

I do not altogether understand the force of the suggestion of your Government that if there were applied to the full extent the principle involved in the return of the sum of $17,246,490 to the Treasury to be applied upon obligations of your Government held by the United

States, it would mean substantially that your Government should be obliged to return to the Treasury the unused balance of all amounts advanced by the Treasury to your Government. It has been the policy of the Treasury since the beginning of its loans to foreign governments that funds advanced for a specific purpose might not be applied to a different purpose without the assent of the Treasury and might never be applied to a purpose for which the Treasury is not authorized to make a loan. In accordance with this policy, the unused balances of advances made for specific purposes have been repaid to the Treasury not only by other governments, but by the French Government. Your Government in January, March, and August, 1919, repaid an aggregate amount of $12,147,000 in reduction of the advances of $71,427,000 and $81,050,800, respectively, made your Government by the Treasury to enable your Government to meet the maturity of the Two-year 5½% Secured Loan Convertible Gold Notes of your Government on April 1, 1919, and the maturity of the Three-year 5% Collateral Gold Notes of the American Foreign Securities Company on August 1, 1919. It was never suggested that the unused balances in those cases should not be repaid to the United States. In the present instance the advances made by the United States Treasury to your Government for expenditures through the Commission for Relief in Northern France were made for the purpose of completing a specific program. Upon receiving from the Commission for Relief the sum of $17,246,490, together with information that it was the unused balance of funds advanced by the United States Treasury, the Treasury has no reason to question the statement of the Commission for Relief in whose hands the expenditures of funds for relief purposes had been. The Treasury assumes that questions concerning the expenditures by the Commission for Relief of funds received from the French Government and arising either out of United States loans or otherwise, will be disposed of between your Government and the Commission for Relief.

Under the power conferred by the Liberty Bond Acts to establish, for the more effectual prosecution of the war, credits in favor of governments at war with enemies of the United States, I am without authority now to establish in favor of your Government a credit for the purpose of enabling your Government to meet its share of the Anglo-French loan. In these circumstances I cannot now make the above-mentioned sum available for that purpose for which the Treasury has not previously assured a credit to your Government.

I think I need scarcely add that nothing is more remote from the intention of the Treasury than to impose any hardship upon your Government in connection with its arrangements for dealing with the approaching maturity of the Anglo-French loan, and that on the contrary it is the earnest desire of the Treasury to co-operate to the full extent of its power and authority in all sound measures undertaken by your Government for dealing with the matter.

I am, my dear Mr. Casenave,

Sincerely yours

(Signed) D. F. Houston

DOCUMENT NO. 523

Letter, UNITED STATES TREASURY TO C.R.B. (IN LIQUIDATION), *acknowledging receipt of statement showing status of $1,000,000 liquidation reserve and accepting check for $440,552.83 for Belgian Government account as part settlement*[14]

WASHINGTON, 26 April 1922

DEAR SIRS:

On behalf of the Secretary, I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 14, 1922, transmitting a statement showing the status of the $1,000,000 reserved by the Commission out of Belgian funds to meet further liabilities on behalf of Belgium Relief in the United States, together with a certified check drawn on the Chase National Bank of New York for $440,552.83. The Treasury understands that the sum of this check represents the balance due the Belgian Government after reserving a sum estimated as necessary to meet the dollar indebtedness still outstanding and which is not required or necessary for the purpose of the relief program.

Should it later be disclosed that any further funds are available on Belgian account out of the estimated sum reserved as being necessary to meet the dollar indebtedness still outstanding, the Treasury assumes that they will be dealt with in the same manner as the sum represented by the check above referred to.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) ELIOT WADSWORTH,
Assistant Secretary

In July 1920 the Commission turned back to the districts of Northern France for charitable distribution the balance of "profits returnable" which a complete accounting of the Commission's operations revealed. In 1921 and 1922 additional gifts were made to the people of Northern France through the Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées. These latter sums appeared in the settlement of the Commission's liquidation reserve and at its request were applied to the continuation of the welfare work among the children inaugurated by the Commission after the Armistice.[15] The following documents record these final gifts which closed the benevolent aspects of the Commission's work in Northern France.

[14] This liquidation account was closed with a statement and check covering balance of $36,683.34 acknowledged by the United States Treasury 23rd August 1922.

[15] See Documents 310 to 313, chapter vi.

DOCUMENT NO. 524

Letter, C.R.B. TO LABBÉ, *enclosing statement of Commission's French account already submitted to French Government and allocating the balance of benevolent funds, i.e., £538,368, to the French districts through the Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées*

NEW YORK, 2 July 1920

Monsieur E. Labbé,
Comité de Ravitaillement des Régions Libérées, Paris

DEAR MONSIEUR LABBÉ:

I take pleasure in sending you through the kindness of Monsieur Chevrillon copies of our statement of accounts which we have asked Monsieur Chevrillon to transmit to the French Minister of Finance.

Under date of 2nd of July we cabled you in regard to the balance due the French districts on profits returnable, which amount is £3,289,475 of which there has been already allotted to the districts, or expended on their behalf £2,751,107, leaving final balance due £538,368.

We hereby allocate this sum to you for the districts in final settlement of this account.

It is the desire of Mr. Hoover and his colleagues that you pay over this sum to the Comité d'Assistance, as we are all greatly interested in the work being accomplished by this Comité and hope to assist it further later on. We feel, however, that you will wish that any action of this kind on your part first have the approval of the French Minister of Finance. This approval we have no doubt you will obtain without difficulty.

Faithfully yours

(Signed) EDGAR RICKARD, W. B. POLAND
Joint Liquidators

DOCUMENT NO. 525

Letter, C.R.B. TO CHEVRILLON, *enclosing the sum of $25,000 as a gift from the C.R.B. to the Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées to be used on behalf of the children of Northern France*

NEW YORK, 3 February 1921

M. Louis Chevrillon,
Treasurer of Executive Committee,
Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées d'Accord de la C.R.B.
Paris

MY DEAR M. CHEVRILLON:

Attached is check for Frs. 352,112.70, the proceeds at rate of the day ($.0710) of a donation of $25,000 made by the C.R.B. at the suggestion of our Chairman, Mr. Hoover, for the Comité d'Assistance

through the A.R.A. European Children's Fund to be used on behalf of the children of the liberated regions of France.

Mr. Hoover is much in hopes that the European Relief Council may be able to contribute a further sum to the Comité d'Assistance. If so, we will cable you.

Faithfully yours

(Signed) W. B. Poland, *Joint Liquidator*

DOCUMENT NO. 526

Letter, C.R.B. to Chevrillon, *advising him of a further and final sum of $78,959.80 for child welfare work being carried on by the Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées*

New York, 1 August 1922

Monsieur Louis Chevrillon, Treasurer
Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées, Paris

My dear M. Chevrillon:

In making the final distribution of funds which have been held in the "Benevolent Account" of the Commission for Relief in Belgium pending its final liquidation, the Chairman, Mr. Hoover, and the Directors of the C.R.B. have decided that a further sum of $78,959.80, which at $.0813 represents the equivalent of approximately Frs. 971,000±, may in justice be allocated to the liberated regions of Northern France.

We have, therefore, cabled our London office to deposit with the Bank Union Parisienne, Paris, subject to your draft as Treasurer of the "Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées d'Accord de la C.R.B.," the franc equivalent of this amount. Will you notify the Executive Committee of the Comité d'Assistance that this sum is to be distributed proportionally to all the districts of the liberated regions in which the C.R.B. and C.F. operated, and is given in trust for this purpose in further recognition of the admirable work of child welfare being carried on by the Comité and the satisfactory manner in which similar sums have been distributed for the benefit of the whole population of the liberated regions formerly supplied by the C.R.B.

Faithfully yours

(Signed) Edgar Rickard, W. B. Poland
Joint Liquidators

3. *The Belgian Educational Foundations*

The larger benevolent balance due to the people of Belgium was destined for a more interesting application. As far back in the life of the Commission as 1916 Hoover had

discussed with the Belgian authorities the question of the disposal of this anticipated balance, and had suggested that after the demands of the destitute had been met, the residue be devoted to the advancement of education.[16] He recommended that a foundation be established, the income from which should be applied to the educational system of Belgium for the promotion of scientific study and industrial research. When in 1919 and 1920 the time for the final liquidation came, these tentative plans were elaborated and carried out. First, the Commission made cash advances of over $18,000,000 to aid directly the universities and technical schools of Belgium. The funds which still remained were apportioned between two permanent foundations organized for the purpose: the C.R.B. Educational Foundation, with a total capital of close to $8,000,000, and the Fondation Universitaire, with nearly $7,000,000. The incomes from these two co-operating foundations—one in America and the other in Belgium—were to be expended to assist young Belgians to obtain university training, to aid by appropriate means the progress of science in Belgium, and to promote the exchange of ideas between Belgium and America.

DOCUMENT NO. 527

Letter, HOOVER TO VAN DE VYVERE, *regarding probable unexpended balances in the hands of the C.R.B. at the end of the relief work, and proposing to turn these back to the Belgian people through the establishment of an educational foundation*

LONDON, 18 July 1916

His Excellency, Monsieur A. Van de Vyvere
Ministre de Finance, Havre

DEAR MR. VAN DE VYVERE:

In respect to our conversation on Saturday last on the subject of my letter of May 9, I assume the following in the present position:

I understand from you that the Belgian Government does not wish to take any responsibility in the collection or administration of public subscriptions either by the C.R.B. or C.N. Furthermore, I understand that the Belgian Government does not insist on any financial liability of any kind against the members of the C.R.B. or C.N., but of course wishes to be satisfied that the accounting and commercial methods are carried out as efficiently as circumstances will permit.

[16] See Document 527.

As to the control which the Belgian Government at Havre maintains in the expenditure of the Belgian Government subsidies in Belgium and in the question as to whether any profits remaining at the end of the war are in the category of public subscriptions or in that of Belgian government subsidies, all this seems to me to be more or less a domestic question and one in which the C.R.B. will be only remotely interested at the end of the work. The public subscriptions will have been exhausted and therefore any balance on hand will be either in the nature of Government balances or of profits, either one of which is absolutely the property of the Belgian people and, obviously, for their sole determination as to application after the work is finished.

In this matter of profits there is an apparent divergence of views between the relief organization and Your Excellency. These profits, according to Your Excellency's view, are earned by the use of Government capital, and, therefore, belong to the Government, or (alternatively) they are the profits by manipulation of exchange and in either case are accountable to the Government.

The contention of the relief organization is that these profits are the result of voluntary services, not only of the many volunteers, firms, and individuals whom the Commission uses abroad, but also of the 35,000 or 40,000 Belgians concerned in distribution in Belgium, whose combined efforts amount to a total elimination of wholesale and retail expense. Alternatively, the relief organization can contend that the profits were a tax imposed on the well-to-do in Belgium for the benefit of the destitute. Further, it can well be contended that the difference on exchange has already been largely given to the Belgian people, in that the price of food in Belgium, even after the profit is taken, is less than in other belligerent countries and has already been dissipated to the population, also that the capital employed is at least 25 per cent from other sources. As I said before, it appears to me that these contentions lie entirely with the Belgian people themselves and that there ought to be no difficulty in coming to an arrangement with regard to this matter satisfactory to all sides. As a matter of administration it is absolutely necessary, for many reasons, to maintain the present system of accounts and the earning of profits, and it is in the interests of the Belgian people that the relief organization should continue a free hand in their expenditure of these profits. This arrangement is a direct stimulation to the most minute economy and the maximum volunteer service and gives the organization latitude in meeting the problem of destitution not possible under the less flexible distribution of the subsidy money. Your Excellency will entirely appreciate that no government could conduct this enterprise at anything like the cost at which it is now being conducted, and I venture to say that Your Excellency would easily ascertain this by comparing the cost of goods, transport, distribution, the relative realization from exchange, interest, and other items which the Belgian Government at Havre obtains with regard to its own purchases.

Entirely apart from this point, however, it must be obvious that,

with the large quantity of goods which we have in transit, on the day of the evacuation of Belgium, the relief organization will be able to liquidate its position with a considerable sum of cash, consisting of unexpended balances on behalf of the Government and of profits. The accumulation of profits and gifts will be a diminishing sum from now forward, as the public subscriptions are no longer able to care for the "Secours Ordinaire," but in any event some definite sum of money is bound to remain on hand on this "profits" account.

It is the desire of your countrymen in Belgium to establish some kind of an institution to commemorate the Relief; and it would appear to me, as being more or less an outside observer, that there is not only a great beneficent opportunity for such an institution, but that, after the war, with the keenness of competition, every help must be given to the Belgian people to enable them to weather the years of stress which must ensue. The injection of a new institution for the stimulation of scientific and industrial research directly in aid to national industry, would appear to be an extremely difficult matter for the Government itself to undertake at such a juncture as this, and it would look like an unique opportunity to deliberately provide that such an institution could be established on non-sectarian and non-political lines for the most beneficent objectives. It is not proposed so far as I know to establish any teaching institution in competition with those existing, but simply to establish a foundation, the income from which would be injected into the present educational system for the stimulation of scientific and industrial research and the expansion of needed departments where the necessity is greatest and where funds could not otherwise be provided. Such foundations have been the greatest factor in the remarkable advancement of American higher education and research, during the last thirty years. Aside from its enormous value, a certain sentimental value would be accomplished in so grand a tribute of this character to the 40,000 Belgians who have shown such devotion to their own countrymen during the war and the truly remarkable organization they have perfected under the most extraordinary difficulties and with the resources so largely provided by the energy and devotion of Your Excellency. I do not assume that either the character or the nature of such an institution could be determined without elaborate consideration, but it is possible now to make it assured in some degree by an agreement as to the destination of any residue of profits. A committee representative of the various universities and other organizations involved should be able to formulate the detailed plan.

If the principle above outlined could be agreed upon, it does not seem to me that it would be difficult for Your Excellency and the Relief organization to arrive at a basis upon which the accounts should be formulated to this object.

I wish to repeat my statement with regard to Your Excellency's question made on Saturday, as to whether the Americans interested were anxious or insistent that this should be done, in which I endeavored to convey to Your Excellency that the Americans are not trying to impose anything upon the Belgian people or their repre-

sentatives or make the slightest suggestion as to the conduct of their own affairs. Our constant attitude has been that we have devoted such resources as we could assemble and such service as we could command, to the support of the destitute in Belgium, not as a matter of charity but as a matter of justice. This attitude gives us no consistent right or position in discussing anything of an internal Belgian character aside from the daily incidents of the present organization of relief. We can, however, consistently second any constructive program for the Belgian people and should obviously be pleased if out of our endeavors we should have contributed any small portion to that end.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 528

Letter, HOOVER TO DELACROIX, *indicating the manner in which the Commission proposed to appropriate the balance of its benevolent funds for extension of higher education in Belgium*

BRUSSELS, 28 August 1919

To His Excellency
M. Delacroix, Prime Minister, Brussels

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

The Belgian Government on 16th July formally approved (as also have the other governments concerned) the method that I proposed for settling the accounts of the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

Section IV (*e*) of that memorandum provided as follows:

"The amounts contributed for charity in cash or in kind, the profits created by voluntary service in handling foodstuffs, being the free charitable aspects of the Commission to be shown by statements of amount and the purpose to which these sums have been applied in charity. Further the basis of such charitable sums which may be decided by the Commission as unexpended and applicable to the subsequent charitable operations now being continued by the Commission will also be shown. Such balances will be appropriated or invested for the benefit of the population in Belgium and Northern France as shall be determined by the Commission."

We have now made a preliminary inspection of the accounts, but owing to the volume of transactions—exceeding four millards of francs—they will not be in final form for some months. In the meantime, it is evident that the sums that would be realized for Belgium under the above paragraph amount to a minimum of Frs. 150,000,000. This sum includes the unexpended gifts and the profits of the Commission for Relief in Belgium applicable to Belgium in all its agencies, in America, England, Holland, and in Belgium through the operations carried on by Comité National as the agents of the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

During these last four years of association with the Belgian people and from discussions with my colleagues in the Comité National, with the members of the Government and the universities, and the public, it has become evident that no more democratic service could be rendered to the Belgian people than that these funds should be applied to the extension of high education in Belgium. The war and the present economic situation have demonstrated the extreme importance of the widest distribution of high education amongst all classes, especially those of limited means. In order to compass this end, it is necessary:

1st. To undertake such measures as will open the institutions themselves so that they may not only render more efficient service to the community as a whole but also that they may undertake the additional burden of this increased attendance.

Therefore I propose that the funds mentioned above should be applied as follows:

a) As to the 37 per cent to the creation of a foundation, the income from which shall be applied in principle to enable the children of families who have not the means to otherwise secure such education, to obtain it, this may be accomplished by gifts, scholarships, or otherwise to obtain this general principle. I would propose that this foundation should be vested in a board of half each Belgian and American trustees, the American trustees to be selected by the Directors of the Commission for Relief in Belgium. Some minor proportion of this fund, as the trustees may consider advisable, could well be applied to the extension of such education as will look toward the protection of child life.

b) Direct payment of 63 per cent of the total funds available to the trustees of the following institutions, proportionally as under:

Brussels University	13⅓%
Louvain University	13⅓%
Ghent University	13⅓%
Liège University	13⅓%
Mons Mining School	3 %
The Colonial School	6⅔%

These funds to be at the free disposition of these institutions but generally for the purpose of increasing their efficiency and ability to serve the community. The total of these sums, however, not to exceed 95,000,000 francs, any excess reverting to fund *a*.

If the above proposals should prove acceptable, I would propose to authorize the Comité National from the funds belonging to the Commission for Relief in Belgium, to make immediate payment of 20,000,000 francs to the proportions mentioned under *b*, in order to enable them to overcome immediately some of the disabilities imposed by the war. The arrangements under *a* to be set up as quickly as the organization can be perfected.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) Herbert Hoover

DOCUMENT NO. 529

Letter, DELACROIX TO HOOVER, *announcing the Belgian Government's approval of the projects outlined in the preceding letters and accepting the first payment for Belgian universities*

BRUSSELS, 5 September 1919

Herbert Hoover, Esq., Paris

DEAR SIR:

The honor falls to me of addressing to you the thanks of the Belgian Government for the generous intentions expressed in your letter of the 28th August 1919.

How many times have you not justified the title of "Friend of the Belgian Nation." For five years you have consecrated your inexhaustible activity to victualling our populations in distress, and now you are about to give a new proof of the ties of profound sympathy which unite you to us, by showing your solicitude for higher education and for all the more advanced studies of our population so sorely tried, and also by assuring the future of the organizations for the protection of childhood founded during the war.

The Council of Ministers, at their sitting of the 5th September, accepted with thanks the project of which you have sketched the broad outlines. They will submit to the Legislation a project for a law granting a civil entity to the universities of Ghent and Liège, to permit these to receive the liberalities of the Commission for Relief, and they ask you—counting on your agreement in this matter—to let all the interested parties benefit by your generosity, in whatever language, French or Flemish, they wish to pursue their higher studies.

While awaiting the vote on this projected law the Government will accept willingly, for the universities of Ghent and Liège, the first sums which you place at their disposal to permit them to supply the most urgent necessities.

Yours very faithfully

(Signed) L. DELACROIX, *Prime Minister*

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 530

Letter, HOOVER TO DELACROIX, *submitting the general plan for appropriating the balance of Commission's benevolent funds for educational purposes and announcing the proposed incorporation of the C.R.B. Educational Foundation for this purpose*

NEW YORK, 10 December 1919

Monsieur Leon Delacroix
Prime Minister, Belgian Government, Brussels

DEAR MONSIEUR:

The Commission for Relief in Belgium is now engaged in adjusting and closing its accounts, in accordance with the memorandum which

I submitted to you in June last, and it hopes to be able to close this matter in the near future, and to thus ascertain the amount of funds at the disposal of the Commission for the purpose of creating the proposed foundation, pursuant to my letter to you of August 28th, and your confirmation thereon on behalf of the Government.

It, therefore, seems desirable at this time to submit the general plan that I have settled for completing these arrangements so far as they concern the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

It is proposed that the funds now in Belgium applicable to this foundation should be transferred from the Commission for Relief in Belgium, which now holds title to them, to a corporation bearing a similar name to the Commission, which will be organized under the laws of one of the states of the United States, the state to be used for the incorporation to be the one most suitable by reason of its statutory law to accomplish the purpose desired. The charter of this corporation will set forth the purposes for which the foundation is created, and with its by-laws will provide for taking, holding, and investing the funds transferred to it by the present Commission, and will provide the necessary committees for its administration, including a committee or committees, to be composed of six members, three of whom shall be nominated by the Belgian Government, to supervise the corporation's investments in Belgium, and to carry out in Belgium the details of the educational features of the foundation.

The corporation will thus be a permanent institution with perpetual life, having the security of being founded under statutory law especially enacted for charitable institutions of this kind, and through its officers and committees, duly constituted, will be able to manage and conduct its affairs by established business methods.

At your early convenience, will you kindly propose the names of the three nominees of the Belgian Government who are to serve on the committee for supervising the Belgian investments of the corporation, and the committee which will have charge of the disbursements of the foundation in Belgium.

Very truly yours

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 531

Telegram, C.R.B. NEW YORK TO BRUSSELS, *summarizing Hoover's reasons for proposing to establish two educational foundations, an American and a Belgian*

NEW YORK, 11 March 1920

SHALER, RELIEF COMMISSION, BRUSSELS

Following is subject matter of letter from Belgian Ambassador to Francqui:

"Hoover asks me to send you the following: He has no desire to proceed in the matter of the University Foundation otherwise than solely in Belgian interest and Belgian wishes. Suggests, however,

that a return to the original idea is in the best Belgian interest, that is, to create one legal foundation in Belgium and another legal foundation in the United States. The whole of the present franc resources to be transferred to the Belgian Foundation. Its directors to comprise two representatives from American Foundation and the entire distribution of income arising from the Belgian Foundation to be carried out by Directors of Belgian Foundation. That the Directors of American Foundation shall comprise the former Directors of the C.R.B. together with two representatives of Belgian Foundation one of whom to be the Belgian Ambassador and that the invested funds of the American Foundation to consist of the dollar residues of the C.R.B. These dollars can be invested either in the United States or, if desirable, invested by American Foundation in Belgium. Income from these funds to pass through Directors of American Foundation to Directors of Belgian Foundation to be expended with approval and sanction of Directors of American Foundation. It appears to him that this arrangement would be the most consonant with a desire for complete stability free from any national or political influence, and the American Foundation would later on attract to itself further support from American public and can be used as a continuous instrument of good feeling for Belgium in the United States. If the whole of the Foundation is set up under purely Belgian auspices the project will at once have lost all American interest. Essential motive of entire proposal is to build up a permanent bridge of fine and high relationship between the two countries to become a permanent force in both communities and is not a question to his mind of pure advantageous disposal of the residue of our common funds."

RICKARD

DOCUMENT NO. 532

Telegram, C.R.B. BRUSSELS TO C.R.B. NEW YORK, *advising of Francqui's agreement with the arrangement proposed in the preceding*

BRUSSELS, 16 March 1920

RELIEF COMMISSION, NEW YORK

Francqui to whom have shown copy your cable March eleventh asked me to cable Hoover his entire agreement with arrangement proposed.

. . . . . .

SHALER, *Relief Commission*

The following table is a recapitulation of the liquidation settlements of the Commission described in the preceding documents.

LIQUIDATION SETTLEMENTS

I. Working Capital

Refunds to the United States Treasury as reductions of loans to Belgium and to France	
1. For the account of the Belgian Government	$ 1,512,901.66
2. For the account of the French Government	$17,246,490.00

II. Benevolent Funds in Liquidation

1. For Benevolence in Northern France	
a) Final allocation from "profits" to the Districts of Northern France	$ 2,611,084.80
b) Through A.R.A. to Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées for child feeding in Northern France	$ 25,000.00
c) Gift to the Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées	$ 78,959.80
2. Gifts for Educational Purposes[17] in Belgium	
a) Gifts to Belgian educational institutions	
To University of Brussels	$ 3,818,897.64
To University of Ghent	3,818,897.64
To University of Liège	3,818,897.64
To University of Louvain	3,818,897.64
To School of Mines, Mons	954,724.39
To Colonial School, Antwerp	1,909,448.84
To Ecole de Carillonneurs, Malines	3,000.00
Total	$18,142,763.79
b) To Fondation Universitaire	$6,846,080.88
c) To C.R.B. Educational Foundation	$7,686,065.17
3. Balance (May 1924) reserve against claims; liquidation expenses; residue to be paid to C.R.B. Educational Foundation	$1,091,129.78

The establishment of the Fondation Universitaire[18] and the C.R.B. Educational Foundation[19] was the last step in the

[17] The gifts to educational institutions and to the Fondation Universitaire were actually paid in Belgian francs. Exchange ratios used in preparing this table were £1 = $4.85 = Frs. 25.40.

[18] Fondation Universitaire, Edouard Willems, Secretary, 11 Rue d'Egmont, Brussels, Belgium. See annual reports of the Fondation Universitaire.

[19] C.R.B. Educational Foundation, Inc., Perrin C. Galpin, Secretary, 42 Broadway, New York, N.Y. Large gifts from capital for endowment and building purposes have been made to Belgian educational institutions, notably for the Universities of Brussels and Louvain. At present, November 1927, the capital of the C.R.B. Educational Foundation is $3,159,930.92. The printed *Annual Reports* of the Foundation present details regarding educational activities.

Commission's settlement with the Belgian Government and people. Since the French settlement had already been made, this represented the final closure of the Commission's accountability for its five years of service. The magnitude of the enterprise and the character of the C.R.B.'s financial responsibilities have been indicated by the summary tables, which are based on the statements of the auditors of the Commission's accounts. The letter from the auditors which follows brings out two points which had an important bearing on both the successful conduct and the successful liquidation of this great undertaking. These points are: first, the important services given by Mr. Hoover and his principal associates, without any remuneration, direct or indirect; and second, the sound and businesslike methods employed in the management of the Commission's affairs.

DOCUMENT NO. 533

Extract of letter, DELOITTE, PLENDER, GRIFFITHS & CO. TO THE COMMISSION, *commenting on the character of the undertaking for which they were the auditors*

NEW YORK, 3 February 1927

Mr. Edgar Rickard
Commission for Relief in Belgium, in Liquidation
New York

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

Our firm acted as auditors of the Commission from the inception of its active operations until the termination thereof, some five years later. In addition to our duties as auditors, at Mr. Herbert Hoover's request, we arranged a method of account-keeping and selected the accountants who supervised the handling of the funds and accounts in its principal offices. Thus the records covering expenditures by the Commission of nearly a billion dollars were under our scrutiny.

Now that those records are passing into history, we are glad to emphasize the thorough and consistent attention of the Commission's Managers to the business of the Commission, and their cooperation, which enabled the records to be so maintained that all the transactions of the Commission could be fully verified, thus preventing any charge being sustained against the integrity of the administration of the Commission's affairs.

The records are evidence of the important services rendered by the Commission's principal officials, which services were given

without remuneration. In this connection, we would state that Mr. Hoover set an example by not accepting, directly or indirectly, any form of remuneration from the Commission and by refusing, throughout the period of the Commission's activities, to take from the funds of the Commission the cost of his traveling or other out-of-pocket expenses while engaged on the business of the Commission.

We consider it an honor to have been selected as auditors of the Commission and to have been able to make a contribution to so great a work. We did not charge for the time of any of our principals during the whole of the term of our service, and so far as our assistants were concerned, we added only a nominal percentage to the cost of their salaries. Therefore, no profit whatever accrued to our firm as a result of the arduous services rendered by our firm over a long term of years.

Yours very truly

(Signed) DELOITTE, PLENDER, GRIFFITHS & CO.

Chapter XIV

INTERGOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT OF RELIEF SUBSIDIES[1]

Almost 80 per cent of the funds utilized by the C.R.B. for relief work in occupied Belgium and France and for rehabilitation following the Armistice were advanced to the Commission by the treasuries of Great Britain, France, and the United States in the form of loans[2] to the Belgian and the French Governments. In liquidating its affairs the Commission accounted to the Belgian and French Governments[3] for its stewardship of these great sums and at this point the Commission's responsibility ended. Subsequent intergovernment loan settlements, since they include, among larger items, these same sums, have a connection, however indirect, with public relations of the Commission. Moreover, the Chairman of the C.R.B. was a member of the American World War Foreign Debt Commission, which negotiated the settlements with Belgium and France. The selected extracts of government agreements and of treaties which follow, though not from the C.R.B. archives, serve to conclude the financial history of the relief work.

In view of the fact that the Versailles Treaty and the United States Government recognized a distinction in the case of Belgium, between pre-Armistice and post-Armistice loans, which materially affected subsequent debt settlement arrangements, the documents here presented relating to the Belgian war debt and those relating to the post-Armistice loans to Belgium are placed in separate groups. A third group concerns the loans to France.

1. *The Belgian War Debt*

The Belgian war debt, as considered in the Versailles Treaty,[4] includes all sums borrowed by Belgium from the

[1] The editors are indebted to John P. Gregg, who has been kind enough to read over the manuscript of this chapter and whose suggestions have been valuable.

[2] Government subsidies to the C.R.B. amounted to $700,540,443.38. See chapter iv, p. 216; chapter xiii, p. 183.

[3] See chapter xiii.

[4] Article 232. See Document 535.

Allied and Associated Governments up to the 11th November 1918. The total was nearly a billion dollars, of which the creditor governments[5] were France and Great Britain, in approximately equal amounts, to the extent of 82 per cent of the total, and the United States 18 per cent. These totals include government advances to the C.R.B. for Belgian relief as follows:[6]

From French Treasury	$ 94,181,410.78
From British Treasury	94,181,410.78
From United States Treasury	153,000,000.00

These figures indicate that approximately 90 per cent of United States loans to Belgium prior to the Armistice were utilized by the C.R.B. A much smaller percentage of the Belgian war debt to France and Great Britain was devoted to relief (about 24 per cent in each case).

As there were no further relief loans to Belgium (through the C.R.B.) by Great Britain[7] or France after the 11th November 1918, the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles whereby Germany became responsible for the payment of this Belgian war debt settled, as far as Belgium was concerned, her indebtedness to Great Britain and France for relief subsidies. With such post-Armistice loans as Great Britain and France made to Belgium for reconstruction and other purposes, the C.R.B. had no concern. But with regard to American relief loans the situation was different. The United States did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles and could not look to Germany, as the Treaty provided, for reimbursement for the war loans to Belgium. Furthermore, after the 11th November 1918, Belgium received additional advances from the United States, part of which were turned

[5] France, Frs. 1,993,300,000; Great Britain, £78,400,000; and United States, $171,800,000. *World Peace Foundation Pamphlets,* Vol. VIII, p. 271. The exact amount owing by Belgium to the United States was $171,780,000. See Document 536.

[6] The Commission for Relief in Belgium, *Balance Sheets and Accounts. . . . . September 1920.* The distribution between the British and French Treasuries of these advances for Belgian account, as here shown, is unofficial. The United States amount is inclusive of the United States Treasury monthly subsidy to the C.R.B. for Belgian account of October 1918.

[7] C.R.B. records indicate that there were small advances from British Government Departments after the 11th November 1918. These were probably included in pre-Armistice loans to Belgium when the total amount involved was determined in the Belgian-British Agreement which was concluded in June 1919.

over to the C.R.B. There were, therefore, war debts and post-Armistice debts, both involving relief funds advanced to the C.R.B. for settlement by direct negotiations between the Belgian and United States Governments. The following extract from a report of the World War Foreign Debt Commission describes the negotiations for the funding of the Belgian war debt.

DOCUMENT NO. 534

Extracts from a Report of the World War Foreign Debt Commission[8] *describing the negotiations respecting the Belgian pre-Armistice debt to the United States*

Obligations of Foreign Governments

The total principal amount of obligations of foreign governments originally held by the Treasury was $10,338,058,352.20. Such obligations were acquired by the United States under the authority of the Liberty bond acts which authorized the Secretary of the Treasury, with the approval of the President, to establish credits in favor of foreign governments engaged in war with enemies of the United States against which cash advances were made for the purpose in general of enabling those governments to meet commitments made in the United States in connection with the prosecution of the war; . . . .

. . . . . .

World War Foreign Debt Commission

The present members of the World War Foreign Debt Commission are:

Andrew W. Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury, chairman
Frank B. Kellogg, Secretary of State
Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce
Reed Smoot, United States Senator
Theodore E. Burton, Member of the House of Representatives
Charles R. Crisp, Member of the House of Representatives
Richard Olney, formerly Member of the House of Representatives
Edward N. Hurley, formerly chairman of the United States Shipping Board
Garrard B. Winston, Undersecretary of the Treasury, is secretary of the commission

. . . . . .

While the integrity of international obligations must be maintained it is axiomatic that no nation can be required to pay to another government sums in excess of its capacity to pay. The commission in its settlement with Great Britain, made on June 19, 1923, and in

[8] *Combined Annual Reports*, "Report for the Fiscal Year 1925," pp. 33, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, and 42. The annual reports of the commission are also included in the annual reports of the Secretary of the Treasury.

subsequent negotiations or settlements has adhered to the principle that adjustments made with each government must be measured by the ability of the particular government to put aside and transfer to the United States the payments called for under the funding agreement. Nor does the principle of capacity to pay require the foreign debtor to pay to the full limit of its present or future capacity. It must be permitted to preserve and improve its economic position, to bring its budget into balance, and to place its finances and currency on a sound basis, and to maintain, and if possible, to improve the standard of living of its citizens. No settlement which is oppressive and retards the recovery and development of the foreign debtor is to the best interests of the United States or of Europe.

. . . . . .

Belgium

The Belgian Government notified the American ambassador at Brussels on June 7, 1925, that Belgium desired to open negotiations in Washington for a settlement of its debt.

On August 10, 1925, a Belgian commission consisting of Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, Belgian ambassador to the United States; Baron George Theunis, formerly Prime Minister of Belgium; Monsieur Emile Francqui, vice governor of the Société Générale de Belgique; and Monsieur Félicien Cattier, head of the Banque d'Outremer, appeared before the commission. The Belgian commission was accompanied by the following experts: Monsieur J. Boet, director of the Ministry of Finance; Monsieur J. B. Vincent, administrator of the Treasury; Monsieur J. Warland, director of the public debt; Monsieur André Terlinden, director of the Société Nationale de Crédit à l'Industrie. Monsieur Robert Silvercruys served as secretary general of the commission.

Meetings of the commission with the Belgian commission were held on August 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, 1925. The meetings were then adjourned to permit the chairman and Senator Smoot to submit the terms of a tentative settlement to the President at Plymouth, Vt. A final meeting was held on August 18, 1925, at which an agreement was reached. The debt-funding agreement was signed on August 18, 1925, and was later approved by the President. It will be submitted to Congress for its approval at its next session. . . . .

In the settlement arrived at the Belgian debt was divided into two parts. It will be recalled that at the time of the Peace Conference at Paris in 1919, Belgium advanced a claim for war damages as a prior charge on reparations amounting to $1,000,000,000 in gold; that she also claimed that Germany should be compelled to redeem in gold 6,200,000,000 paper marks forced into circulation in Belgium during the period of German occupation, which marks had been redeemed by the issuance of Belgian francs by Belgium; and that she also maintained that France, Great Britain, and the United States should cancel her war debts, representing sums advanced prior to November 11, 1918. During a critical period of the Peace Conference, largely at the instance of President Wilson, Belgium was induced to reduce her claim for war damages from $1,000,000,000 to $500,000,000, and to

abandon her claim for 6,200,000,000 gold marks on the condition that France, Great Britain, and the United States would forgive her prearmistice debts and would look to Germany for repayment of the sums due. On June 16, 1919, M. Clemenceau, President Wilson, and Mr. Lloyd George signed a letter addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium stating that each would recommend to the appropriate governmental agency of his Government that upon delivery to the Reparation Commission of bonds of Germany to be issued in reimbursement of all sums which Belgium had borrowed from the three Governments prior to the armistice, each Government would accept a proportionate share of the bonds on account of Belgium's obligation to repay the loans, which obligation was thereupon to be cancelled. This arrangement was incorporated in article 232 of the treaty of Versailles. Although France and Great Britain ratified the treaty, it was not ratified by the United States. The question of the release of Belgium from her obligation to repay the prearmistice advances was separately submitted to Congress by President Wilson in a communication dated February 22, 1921, a few days before the close of his administration, but never came up for consideration. Although the representatives of Belgium at the Peace Conference understood that the action of President Wilson in negotiating the peace treaty and making the agreement was subject to ratification, it was not anticipated that he would experience any difficulty in securing ratification in the United States. The man in the street in Belgium always regarded the failure of the United States to confirm the agreement of President Wilson as a breach of faith.

While the commission was aware of the fact that no legal obligation rested upon the United States as a result of the assurances given Belgium at the time of the Peace Conference, it nevertheless felt that there continued a weighty moral obligation upon this Government, since as a result of the action taken by President Wilson Belgium had waived rights which otherwise it might have obtained. This differentiated the prearmistice debt of Belgium from all other debts due the United States from foreign countries.

The provisions of article 232 of the treaty of Versailles were not carried out by Germany. The failure of Germany to fulfill its reparation obligations finally resulted in the adoption of the Dawes plan of August, 1924. In an agreement of January 14, 1925, signed at Paris, apportioning the Dawes plan receipts among the several countries entitled to reparations it was provided that 5 per cent of the annual payments by Germany available for reparations (first deducting certain priorities, such as service of the German external loan of 1924, army costs, and the like) was set apart to provide repayment of the Belgian prearmistice debt. France and Great Britain agreed to accept their proportion of the amounts to be received, and Belgium has been relieved to this extent as a debtor of these two nations. The portion of these receipts which would have been payable to the United States if the treaty of Versailles had been ratified by this Government is being paid to Belgium by reason of her prearmistice debt to the United States, and Belgium agreed to pay over

such amounts immediately to this country. The commission did not accept the Belgian proposal that amounts to be received from Germany be substituted by Belgium for repayment of the prearmistice debt. The commission, however, felt that under all the circumstances the United States should not ask Belgium to repay more than the principal of the prearmistice advances. A schedule of annual installment payments over a period of 62 years, without interest, the payments to be a direct obligation of Belgium irrespective of receipt of payments from Germany, was finally agreed upon by the two commissions. The amount of the annual installments increases until it reaches $2,900,000 in the sixth year. . . . .

DOCUMENT NO. 535

Extract of Treaty of Versailles, *Part VIII, Reparation; Articles 231, 232, 233*

Section I. General Provisions

Article 231

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

Article 232

The Allied and Associated Governments recognise that the resources of Germany are not adequate, after taking into account permanent diminutions of such resources which will result from other provisions of the present Treaty, to make complete reparation for all such loss and damage.

The Allied and Associated Governments, however, require, and Germany undertakes, that she will make compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers and to their property during the period of the belligerency of each as an Allied or Associated Power against Germany by such aggression by land, by sea and from the air, and in general all damage as defined in Annex I hereto.

In accordance with Germany's pledges, already given, as to complete restoration for Belgium, Germany undertakes, in addition to the compensation for damage elsewhere in this Part provided for, as a consequence of the violation of the Treaty of 1839, to make reimbursement of all sums which Belgium has borrowed from the Allied and Associated Governments up to November 11, 1918, together with interest at the rate of five per cent. (5%) per annum on such sums. This amount shall be determined by the Reparation Commission, and the German Government undertakes thereupon forthwith to make a special issue of bearer bonds to an equivalent amount payable in marks gold, on May 1, 1926, or, at the option of the German Government, on the 1st of May in any year up to 1926.

Subject to the foregoing, the form of such bonds shall be determined by the Reparation Commission. Such bonds shall be handed over to the Reparation Commission, which has authority to take and acknowledge receipt thereof on behalf of Belgium.

ARTICLE 233

The amount of the above damage for which compensation is to be made by Germany shall be determined by an Inter-Allied Commission, to be called the *Reparation Commission* and constituted in the form and with the powers set forth hereunder and in Annexes II to VII inclusive hereto.

This Commission shall consider the claims and give to the German Government a just opportunity to be heard.

The findings of the Commission as to the amount of damage defined as above shall be concluded and notified to the German Government on or before May 1, 1921, as representing the extent of that Government's obligations.

The Commission shall concurrently draw up a schedule of payments prescribing the time and manner for securing and discharging the entire obligation within a period of thirty years from May 1, 1921. If, however, within the period mentioned Germany fails to discharge her obligations, any balance remaining unpaid may, within the discretion of the Commission, be postponed for settlement in subsequent years, or may be handled otherwise in such manner as the Allied and Associated Governments, acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in this Part of the present Treaty, shall determine.

DOCUMENT NO. 536

Message[9] *from the* PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, *February 22, 1921, to the* SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES *regarding pre-Armistice loans to Belgium*

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I herewith call your attention to an agreement with Belgium made by the British and French Premiers and myself, which is embodied in the following letter:

June 16, 1919

M. Hymans,
Ministre des Affaires Etrangeres,
Hotel Lotti, Paris

SIR:

The Reparation Clauses of the draft Treaty of Peace with Germany obligate Germany to make reimbursement of all sums which Belgium has borrowed from the Allied and Associated Governments up to November 11, 1918, on account of the violation by Germany of the Treaty of 1839. As

[9] 66th Congress, 3d Session. Senate Document No. 413.

evidence of such an obligation Germany is to make a special issue of bonds to be delivered to the Reparation Commission.

Each of the undersigned will recommend to the appropriate governmental agency of his Government that, upon the delivery to the Reparation Commission of such bonds, his Government accept an amount thereof corresponding to the sums which Belgium has borrowed from his Government since the war and up to November 11, 1918, together with interest at 5 per cent unless already included in such sums, in satisfaction of Belgium's obligation on account of such loans, which obligation of Belgium's shall thereupon be cancelled.

We are, dear Mr. Minister,

Very truly yours,

G. Clemenceau
Woodrow Wilson
D. Lloyd George

In recommending to you that Congress take appropriate action with regard to this agreement, certain facts should be brought to your attention.

The neutrality of Belgium was guaranteed by the Treaty of London of 1839. In considering the reparation to be made by Germany it was agreed that the action of Germany, in grossly violating this treaty by an attack on Belgium, obligated the German Government under international law to repay to Belgium the costs of war. On this principle the Treaty of Versailles (Art. 232) provided that in accordance with Germany's pledges already given as to the complete restoration for Belgium, Germany should undertake, in addition to the compensation for material damage, to make reimbursement of all sums which Belgium had borrowed from the Allied and Associated Governments up to November 11, 1918, together with interest at 5 per cent per annum on such sums. This obligation was to be discharged by a special issue of bearer bonds to an equivalent amount payable in gold marks on May 1, 1926, or at the option of the German Government on the 1st of May in any year up to 1926.

For various reasons the undertaking defined in the above letter was not embodied in the Treaty. Belgium's obligations to the United States for advances made up to the date of the Armistice amounted to approximately $171,000,000, and to England and France they amounted, I am informed, to about £164,700,000. In view of the special circumstances in which Belgium became involved in the war and the attitude of this country toward Belgium, it was felt that the United States might well agree to make the same agreement respecting pre-Armistice loans to Belgium as England and France offered to do.

Advances made by the Treasury to the Belgian Government from the beginning of the war to the Armistice amounted to $171,780,000. This principal sum, however, includes advances of $499,400 made to enable the Belgians to pay the interest due November 15, 1917, and $1,571,468.42 to enable the payment of the interest due May 15, 1918. The interest on the advances has been paid up to April 15, 1919, the interest due from May 15, 1918, to that date having been paid out of

February 2nd 1915.

H.C.Hoover, Esq.,
3, London Wall Buildings,
London, ENGLAND.

Dear Mr. Hoover:-

After your departure I took up with the German authorities the question of the note you requested, and today, at last, I have it: a decree from the Governor General himself and a letter from von Sandt thanking the Commission. This, I think, is what you wanted.

I am enclosing herewith copies and translations of the note and decree.

I am, my dear Mr. Hoover, with many kind regards,

Very sincerely yours,

Brand Whitlock

Enclosures.

Treasury loans for which the United States holds Belgian obligations, which, however, were made after November 11, 1918, the date of the Armistice. This latter advance would not come within the terms of the Agreement above mentioned. If, therefore, the United States accepts payment of Belgian obligations given before the Armistice by receiving a corresponding amount of German obligations, it would seem that it should receive German obligations amounting to $171,780,000 with interest from April 15, 1919.

Although it is understood that England and France will take their share of the German bonds when received by Belgium, I am informed that the Reparation Commission has not as yet finally determined the details of the issuance of the necessary bonds by the German Government. A recommendation at this time that suitable legislative action should be taken may appear somewhat premature, but in view of the approaching termination of my Administration I have brought this matter to your attention, hoping that suitable action may be taken at the appropriate time.

WOODROW WILSON

THE WHITE HOUSE
February 22, 1921

DOCUMENT NO. 537

Extract of REPARATION COMMISSION'S STATEMENT *of Germany's obligation, 31 December 1922,*[10] *naming the amount for which Germany is obligated to issue bonds to Belgium on account of the Belgian war debt*

CAPITAL DEBT

Allies Loans to Belgium [Belgian war debt] G.M.....	5,624,000,000

DOCUMENT NO. 538

Extract of Agreement[11] *between* ALLIED AND ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS, *Paris, 14 January 1925, regarding the distribution of the Dawes Annuities. Article 4, Belgian War Debt*

A) As from September 1, 1924, 5% of the total sum available in any year after meeting the charges for the service of the German external loan, 1924, and the charges for costs of commissions, costs of U.S. army of occupation, annuity for arrears of pre-May 1 army costs, prior charge for current army costs, and any other prior charges which may hereafter be agreed, shall be applied to the

[10] *Statement of Germany's Obligations,* Reparation Commission IV, 1923, p. 21. The amount in gold marks represents the total of bonds which Germany was obligated to issue on account of Allied loans to Belgium before the 11th November 1918.

[11] *World Peace Foundation Pamphlets,* Vol. VIII, pp. 280–281.

reimbursement of the Belgian war debt as defined in the last paragraph of Art. 232 of the treaty of Versailles.

B) The amounts so applied in any year shall be distributed between the powers concerned in proportion to the amount of the debts due to them respectively as at May 1, 1921. Pending the final settlement of the accounts, France shall receive 46%, Great Britain 42% and Belgium (by reason of her debt to U.S.A.) 12%.

2. *Post-Armistice Loans to Belgium*

The principal of obligations for cash advanced by the United States to Belgium after the Armistice was $175,430,-808.68, and of this total 60 per cent, or $104,642,122.60,[12] was employed by the C.R.B. for relief and rehabilitation in Belgium. As before mentioned neither the British nor French treasuries furnished financial support to the Commission after the Armistice. Their respective Governments, however, did open credits or supply cash to the Belgian Government in the first few months after the war, though the amounts were not large in comparison to United States loans to Belgium. In January 1919 Great Britain opened a "Reconstruction Credit" of £9,000,000 for Belgium on a strictly commercial basis.[13] The terms of settlement of this debt are given as of interest in relation to the terms of the Belgian settlement with the United States.

French advances to Belgium after the Armistice are reflected in the budgets[14] of these two countries in the years following the war. This debt amounting to approximately 240,000,000 French francs had apparently been liquidated by 1927, when a note accounting for the disappearance of this Belgian debt in the budget of that year explains that it was offset by sums which were due Belgium as a result of the occupation of the Ruhr. There were, thus, no funding arrangements in this instance.

[12] United States Treasury advances to the C.R.B. for Belgian account after October 1918 were $106,632,260.44, of which $1,990,137.83 (unused for the purposes advanced) was returned to the Treasury in reduction of Belgian loans. See chapter xiii, Documents 519, 520, 521, 523.

[13] See Document 540. A debt of the Belgian Congo Colony to Great Britain of £3,500,000 extending back to 1916 was funded at the same time (31st December 1925) as this Reconstruction Credit.

[14] *Annuaire Statistique de la Belgique,* Vol. 50, p. 141; Vol. 51, p. 139; *Bulletin de Statistique et de Législation Comparée,* Vol. 100, p. 486; Vol. 101, p. 1251.

DOCUMENT NO. 539

Extract from a Report of the WORLD WAR FOREIGN DEBT COMMISSION[15] *referring to Belgian post-Armistice debts to the United States*

Repayment of the postarmistice debt, amounting as of June 15, 1925, including accrued interest, to $246,000,000, was arranged on lines substantially similar to the settlements made with other countries. A detailed statement of the calculation of this portion of the debt is also set out in the agreement. Payments of principal are spread over a period of 62 years with interest in arbitrarily fixed amounts during the first 10 years, and interest at the rate of 3½ per cent a year thereafter.

After the preliminary periods the total payments to be made by Belgium each year for the remaining 52 years of the debt-funding period will be approximately $12,700,000 a year. The adjustment of the early payments on both the prearmistice and postarmistice debts was made to bring the total annual payments within Belgium's capacity and particularly to meet her present difficulties in obtaining foreign exchange because of the unfavorable balance of her commodity trade, the shrinkage in her income from foreign investments, and the lack of other invisible items in amounts sufficient to offset her unfavorable commodity trade balance, and further to aid her in her efforts to balance her budget and place her currency on a sound basis.

DOCUMENT NO. 540

Extracts of Explanatory Statement presented to Chamber of Representatives of Belgium, Session of the 9th February 1926, regarding the debts of Belgium and of the Belgian Congo Colony to Great Britain

The discussions relating to the consolidation of the respective debts of Belgium and the Belgian Congo Colony to Great Britain have resulted in Accords which were signed at London on December 31, 1925.

As you will see below, the basis of the arrangements concluded is the same for both debts; but the principle of the financial separation of Belgium and of the Colony, which is laid down in the colonial Charter, rendered necessary the conclusion of two distinct Accords.

The present proposed law is for the purpose of ratifying these two conventions, of which the text in the English language and a translation are annexed hereto.

The Belgian debt to be funded amounts to 9,000,000 Pounds sterling. It represents the amount of the credit, called *Reconstruction Credit*, which Great Britain opened to Belgium by virtue of a convention of the 31st of January, 1919, regarding which detailed information was furnished to Parliament in the annex to the statement of the situation of the Public Treasury on January 1, 1923 (pp. 153 to 156).

[15] *Combined Annual Reports*, "Report for the Fiscal Year 1925," p. 42.

According to the terms of the said convention, this credit was destined to "facilitate the task of the Belgian Government and its nationals in the placing of orders for products and articles manufactured in Great Britain necessary for the restoration of Belgium until such time as she shall have been indemnified by the enemy Powers."

This credit, which has been completely utilized, has been "carried on a special account at the Bank of England in consideration of the periodical discount, at 5%, of Treasury bonds of the Belgian Government, drawn up in sterling at three months, to the nominal value of 9,000,000 pounds sterling, these bonds to be renewed until the receipt of the indemnity to be furnished by the enemy Powers permits of the Belgian Government's paying this off.

"The first sums received by the Belgian Government as a result of compensation or indemnity by enemy Powers" stated this convention further, "will be devoted to the liquidation of the above-mentioned Treasury bonds, *pari passu* with the liquidation of all similar advances received from any one of the associated Governments."

The English reconstruction credits therefore constituted a distinctly commercial post-war debt, entailing a kind of privilege on Belgian priority, which has become exigible in fact by reason of the payments of Germany to Belgium.

England, however, did not exact repayment on the proceeds of German reparations; already in 1922, on the contrary, she admitted the principle of the funding of this debt.

The negotiations begun at that time remained in suspense so long as the capital question of German reparations was not settled; they were taken up again shortly after the conclusion of the Washington Accord of August 18, 1925, and, on the initiative of the British Treasury, were from that time onwards conducted jointly for the Belgian and Congolese debts.

The debt of the Belgian Congo to England has quite a different origin from that of Belgium.

During the course of the year 1916, the Government of the Colony, the metropolitan services of which were functioning in London and Havre, found itself obliged to have recourse to a loan to meet the disbursements which could not be covered by the regular advances which the Allies granted, for war necessities, to Belgium.

These disbursements, which were estimated for the years 1916, 1917 and 1918 at 3,500,000 pounds sterling . . . .

. . . . . .

The essential terms of the two Accords, Belgian and Congolese, are as follows:

INTEREST

5% per annum from 1st of January 1926 onwards, payable semi-annually on June 30 and December 31 of each year; the interest already paid by Belgium on the Treasury bonds for the period subsequent to December 31, 1925, as well as that incurred to that date and remaining due by the Colony, form the subject of appropriate adjustments.

REDEMPTION

In twenty-five years as from the sixth year, by successive repayments on the 31st of December of the years 1931 to 1955, in accordance with the redemption tables annexed to the Accords; during this period, the annuities required for interest and redemption combined remain fairly constant.

[*Translation*]

3. *Loans to France*

Government subsidies to the C.R.B. for relief purposes in Northern France came from Great Britain, France, and the United States. The amounts were as follows:[16]

British Treasury	$ 14,863,917.95
United States Treasury	127,000,000.00
French Treasury	110,681,443.43

The sums are small compared with the total war loans to France by the United States and Great Britain, which amounted to about $4,000,000,000 and $3,000,000,000, respectively. The two debt settlement agreements between the United States and France, and Great Britain and France, extracts of the terms of which follow, have not as yet[17] been ratified by the French Chamber of Deputies.

DOCUMENT NO. 541

Extracts from a Report of the WORLD WAR FOREIGN DEBT COMMISSION[18] *describing the debt funding negotiations with the French Debt Commission headed by* M. JOSEPH CAILLAUX

A French debt commission, headed by M. Joseph Caillaux, finance minister of France, appeared before the commission on September 24, 1925, to negotiate a settlement of the French debt to the United States. The following were the members of the French commission which accompanied M. Caillaux: M. Emile Daeschner, French Ambassador at Washington; Senator Henry Berenger; Senator Louis Dausset; Senator Fernand Chapsal; Senator Paul Dupuy; Deputy Vincent Auriol; Deputy Lucien Lamoreux; Deputy Maurice Bokanowski; Deputy Pierre de Chambrun; M. Joseph Simon; M. Moreau-Neret, Ministry of Finance; M. Haguenin, Inspector of Finances; M.

[16] The Commission for Relief in Belgium, *Balance Sheets and Accounts, ... September 1920.* The C.R.B. returned $17,246,490.00 (unused for the purpose advanced) to the United States Treasury in reduction of loans to France. See chapter xiii, Document 522.

[17] January 1929.

[18] *Combined Annual Reports,* "Report for the Fiscal Year 1925," pp. 44, 45, 46, and 47.

Lacour-Gayet, financial attaché of the French Embassy at Washington.

Joint meetings with the French representatives were held on September 24, 25, 28, and October 1, 1925. The two commissions were unable to reach an agreement before the departure of the French commission from Washington on October 2, 1925. The negotiations have not been suspended, however. It is expected that they will be continued either through regular diplomatic channels or through special representatives of the French Government coming to this country to confer with the commission.

In order that the public might be fully informed as to the attitude of the commission in its discussions with M. Caillaux and his associates it was decided at the conclusion of the negotiations to release to the press the essential proposals made by the commission.

The following statement and proposal was handed M. Caillaux on September 28, 1925:

"We have had the privilege of considering your statement of this morning. We understand this to be a reaffirmation of your proposal to us of the 24th instant; that is, that you should pay $25,000,000 annually for the first 5 years, $30,000,000 annually for the following 5 years, $60,000,000 annually for the following 10 years, and $90,000,000 annually for the last 42 years, this sum completely to extinguish the indebtedness. We have stated the reasons why this sum in our opinion is inadequate.

It seems to us that you consider the above proposed annuities are an application to your indebtedness to us of the principles discussed between France and England as applicable to the war debt of France to England. But we wish to point out that an examination of the existing settlements and tentative agreement between France and England discloses an entire difference. We find that the principles of these arrangements, if applied to the debt of the United States, would imply a larger obligation upon the part of France to the United States than that contained in our proposal below. . . . .

. . . . . .

The net result of the application of the principles [British-French] to the American debt would bring about that France should pay to the United States an annual amount of $161,000,000 for the first 20 years, and $61,000,000 thereafter for 42 years. These payments would be altered if the annuity of $61,000,000 were deferred for the first seven years and added to the subsequent period, as discussed in London. It seems to us that those principles of repayment are infeasible to France in the application of its indebtedness to us.

. . . . . .

You have requested that we should be more specific and we have now the pleasure of laying before you a definite proposal:

(1) We propose to consolidate the entire indebtedness into one total sum. The amount of this indebtedness as of June 15, 1925, with accrued interest at the rate of the existing French obligations, is about $4,227,000,000. We propose, however, that interest should be calculated upon the most favorable basis of our previous settlements,

under which the principal, with accrued interest would as of June 15, 1925, amount to about $4,025,000,000, being a concession of over $200,000,000 in accrued interest.

(2) We propose that the French Government should undertake to pay the principal of the debt in annual installments graduated upward during the period of 62 years, as is the case of the other settlements made by the United States. This would require at the first year the sum of $20,000,000 on account of the principal, being approximately one-half of 1 per cent of the total principal, the payments on principal increasing gradually over the entire period of 62 years. You will recognize that in the arrangement of this schedule it has been the desire of the American commission to so arrange the payments as to meet the economic and fiscal necessities of France.

(3) There therefore remains the question of the rate of interest to be paid upon the debt. In our desire to meet the difficulties of the French Government, and at the same time to provide that the American people may secure some return by participation in the increased strength and productivity to be expected in France, we propose that interest the first year shall be at the rate of one-half of 1 per cent per annum, and that this rate shall increase each year by one-fourth of 1 per cent. This would bring an interest rate up to 3½ per cent at the thirteenth year, and this to remain as the maximum for the balance of the period."

DOCUMENT NO. 542

Extract from a Report of the World War Foreign Debt Commission[19] *describing further negotiations (1925–1926) for funding the French debt to the United States*

After the Caillaux commission returned to France negotiations for the settlement of the debt were informally continued through the French Embassy at Washington.

On December 1, 1925, the commission received and considered an unofficial proposal of settlement. The proposal was further considered at a meeting of the commission on December 3, 1925, when it was decided that it did not furnish a satisfactory basis for discussion.

On January 23, 1926, Senator Henry Berenger, the newly appointed French ambassador at Washington, called on the chairman of the commission and indicated that he desired to reopen negotiations for the settlement of the debt. Further informal conferences were held from time to time with representatives of the commission. Settlement of the debt was authorized at a meeting of the commission on April 29, 1926. The funding agreement was signed and approved by the President the same day. It has been approved by the House of Representatives, but has not yet been approved by the Senate. It has not yet been ratified by France. Copies of the statement issued to the press and of the agreement appear, respectively, as Exhibits 90 and 93, pages 254 and 257.

[19] *Combined Annual Reports,* "Report for the Fiscal Year 1926," pp. 75, 76.

The amount of the debt funded was calculated on the same basis as in previous settlements; that is, with interest at 4¼ per cent to December 15, 1922, and 3 per cent thereafter to June 15, 1925, the date of the agreement. After deducting a cash payment of $386,686.89 made upon execution of the agreement, the total indebtedness funded into bonds was $4,025,000,000. This amount is to be paid in annuities commencing with $30,000,000 in the first year and rising to $125,000,000 in the seventeenth year, continuing at this figure until the sixty-second year, when the amount will be $117,674,104.17. A statement of the amounts payable annually to the United States appears as Exhibit 94, page 262. Under these annuities the total principal funded will be repaid in full with interest thereon as follows: after the first 5 years and for the next 10 years, 1 per cent per annum; for the next 10 years, 2 per cent per annum; for the next 8 years, 2½ per cent per annum; for the next 7 years, 3 per cent per annum; and for the remaining 22 years, 3½ per cent per annum. Over the entire period the United States will receive $6,847,674,104.17.

DOCUMENT NO. 543

Agreement for the settlement of the War Debt of France to Great Britain[20]

The British and French Governments, having arrived at a definite settlement of the debts due by France to Great Britain arising out of the Great War,

The undersigned, duly authorised by their respective Governments, subject to such ratification as may be required, have agreed as follows:—

1. France agrees to pay, and Great Britain to accept, the following annuities in full and final settlement (subject to the provisions of Article 7 of this Agreement) of the War Debt due by France to Great Britain, in respect of which Great Britain holds French sterling Treasury Bills to the value of £653,127,900, viz:—

	£ millions
During the financial year 1926–27	4
During the financial year 1927–28	6
During the financial year 1928–29	8
During the financial year 1929–30	10
During the financial years 1930–31 to 1956–57 inclusive	12½
During the financial years 1957–58 to 1987–88 inclusive	14

The above payments will be made in sterling at the Bank of England, London, in equal half-yearly instalments on the 15th September and 15th March of each year so that the first instalment shall be paid on the 15th September, 1926, and the last instalment on the 15th March, 1988.

[20] *Cmd. 2692*, London, 1926.

2. France will issue and deliver to the British Treasury on or before the 15th September, 1926, a bond in respect of each of the instalments provided for in Article 1 of this Agreement.

3. The payments due under all bonds issued in accordance with this Agreement shall be made without deduction for, and shall be exempt from, any and all taxes and other public dues present or future imposed by or under authority of France or any political or local taxing authority within France.

4. France, at her option, upon not less than ninety days' notice to Great Britain, may postpone payment of a part not exceeding one-half of any of the half-yearly instalments due under Article 1 to any subsequent 15th September or 15th March not more than three years distant from its due date, but only on condition that in case France shall at any time exercise this option as to the payment of any instalment, the instalments falling due in the third succeeding year cannot be postponed at all unless and until the instalments due three years, two years and one year previous thereto shall actually have been paid in full. All such postponed payments shall bear interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, payable half-yearly.

5. If at any time it appears that the aggregate payments effectively received by Great Britain under Allied War Debt Funding Agreements and on account of Reparations or of Liberation Bonds exceed the aggregate payments effectively made by Great Britain to the Government of the United States of America in respect of war debts, an account shall be drawn up by the British Treasury, interest at 5 per cent. being allowed on both sides of the account; and if that account shows that the receipts exceed the payments, Great Britain will credit France against the payments next due by France under Article 1 of this Agreement with such proportion of that excess as the payments effectively made by France under Article 1 of this Agreement bear to the aggregate sums effectively received by Great Britain under all Allied War Debt Funding Agreements. Thereafter a similar account will be drawn up by the British Treasury each year, and any further excess of the receipts over the payments shall each year give rise to a credit to France of a proportion of such excess calculated in the manner indicated above. On the other hand, any deficit shall be made good by an increase in the payments next due by France up to a similar proportion of such deficit within the limit of the total amount of the credits already allowed to France under this Article.

For the purpose of this Article any capital sums which may hereafter be realised by Great Britain in respect of Reparations or of Liberations Bonds will be taken at their annual value, taking account of amortisation.

6. The accounts relating to the war debt of France to Great Britain shall be finally closed, and the British Treasury shall be entitled to retain any sums credited or to be credited to France in respect of such accounts. Save as provided in this Agreement, the contracting parties and their agents reciprocally renounce all claims or counterclaims against the other contracting party or their agents in respect of the above-mentioned accounts or the services and supplies to which they relate.

7. The sum of £53,500,000 shall remain as a non-interest-bearing debt of France to Great Britain, the repayment of which will be settled by a further Agreement. Meanwhile, the British Government will retain (without interest) against this debt the gold remitted to London by the French Government during the war under the Calais Agreement.

8. Upon the execution of this Agreement and the delivery to Great Britain of the bonds of France to be issued hereunder, duly executed, the British Treasury will cancel and surrender to France the French Treasury Bills at present held by Great Britain.

Done in duplicate both in English and in French, the original English text being authentic in case of difference.

London, this twelfth day of July, 1926

For the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland:

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL
Chancellor of the Exchequer

For the French Republic:

J. CAILLAUX
Minister of Finance

LETTER FROM M. CAILLAUX TO THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER DATED THE 12TH JULY, 1926

12th July, 1926

DEAR MR. CHURCHILL,

In assuming the responsibility of signing the agreement for the settlement of the French war debt to Great Britain and thereby accepting the payment of the annuities fixed on the sole credit of France, I feel bound to explain that in the opinion of the French Government, the future possibility of making payments and transfers across the exchange of the amounts required to assure the fulfilment of the debt settlements with the United States and Great Britain inevitably depends largely on the continued transfer of receipts from Germany under the Dawes Plan. If, therefore, for reasons outside the control of France, such receipts should cease completely or to an extent greater than one half, a new situation would be created and the French Government reserves the right in such an event of asking the British Government to reconsider the question in the light of all the circumstances then prevailing.

It is subject to this express reservation that I am ready to sign the agreement which we have drawn up.

J. CAILLAUX

[*Translation*]

REPLY OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER TO M. CAILLAUX

TREASURY CHAMBERS
12th July, 1926

DEAR MONSIEUR CAILLAUX,

I have received your letter of the 12th July. As I have explained His Majesty's Government must maintain the position that the settle-

ment which we have arrived at of the French war debt to this country depends, like that debt itself, on the sole credit of France. You will realise that in the hypothetical circumstances that you mention, Great Britain would already have suffered a diminution of the receipts from the Dawes Scheme, which we have taken into account in arriving at the various debt settlements and this is one of the factors which would have to be borne in mind in the event of any reconsideration of the question being desired by the French Government. Subject to this I do not object to the statement that you make.

In the event of any modification being made, I should expect, in order to secure equal treatment among creditors, that other creditors of France would take into consideration a corresponding modification of debts due to them.

Believe me my dear M. Caillaux,

Yours sincerely,

WINSTON CHURCHILL

4. *Relief Subsidies and United States Debt Settlement Concessions*

The sums advanced by the United States to the Allies during the war were raised by the Government through the issue of Liberty Loans, the current interest (up to 4¼ per cent) and other charges on which have to be borne by the American taxpayer. In obtaining cash advances from the United States Treasury, the Allied Governments signed certificates of indebtedness bearing in general an interest rate of 5 per cent.[21] In funding the war debts the United States did not hold the borrowers to these terms, but on the contrary, as the preceding documents show, the debt settlements with Belgium and with France not only reduce the interest charges prior to the date of funding but arrange a schedule of payments in amounts and over such a long period of time as to effect considerable cancellations. It may not be out of place to compare these concessions, which must be borne by the American taxpayer, with the United States' advances to the C.R.B. for relief to Belgium and Northern France.

Belgium is relieved of her pre-Armistice debts to the Allied and Associated Governments by the Treaty of Versailles. Furthermore, the Paris agreement of the 14th Janu-

[21] Interest rates subsequent to the 28th February 1918 were uniformly 5 per cent. The World War Foreign Debt Commission, *Combined Annual Reports*, p. 332.

ary 1925[22] which regulates the distribution of the Dawes Plan annuities, stipulates that Belgium shall receive that portion of the annuities due by reason of the Belgian pre-Armistice debt to the United States. The subsequent direct United States–Belgium settlement covered the total Belgian indebtedness to the United States the amount of which, prior to funding, was $483,426,000.[23] The principal of this total Belgian indebtedness as funded, after the elimination or reduction of interest charges was, however, $417,780,000. This amount is funded over a period of 62 years[24] by means of annual payments, the present value of which, at 4¼ per cent interest payable semiannually, is $225,000,000. Concessions to Belgium thus indicated amount to over $258,000,000, or somewhat more than the United States advances to the C.R.B. for Belgian relief.[25] Moreover, as mentioned above, the United States waived in Belgium's favor the German annuities on account of the pre-Armistice portion of the debt.

In the case of France and the United States, the French debt prior to funding was $4,230,777,000, whereas the principal of total indebtedness as funded was $4,025,000,000. The present value of the annual payments at 4¼ per cent interest payable semiannually over the 62 years period is $1,996,509,000, or 47.2 per cent of the debt prior to funding. The amount of United States Treasury advances ($109,753,510) actually utilized by the C.R.B. for relief in Northern France is of small matter compared to the concessions[26] thus indicated.

[22] Article 4, "The Belgian War Debt," is quoted in Document 538. The proportions due France and Great Britain, on account of pre-Armistice loans to Belgium, are paid directly to these governments.

[23] The figures here given for Belgian and French debts prior to funding, as funded, and the present value of annual payments are taken from the World War Foreign Debt Commission, *Combined Annual Reports*, p. 443.

[24] The amount of pre-Armistice indebtedness ($171,780,000) is funded without interest. In funding the post-Armistice indebtedness ($246,000,000) a graduated rate of interest payment is provided for the first 10 years so that at the beginning of the eleventh year a rate of 3½ per cent shall apply throughout the remainder of the period of payments. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

[25] These advances were: pre-armistice $153,000,000; post-Armistice $104,642,122.60; total $257,642,122.60.

[26] For a discussion of concessions granted by the United States in the funding arrangements with various Allied Governments, see Bank of Manhattan Company, *The A B C's of Foreign Debts.*

Chapter XV

THE MOBILIZATION OF PUBLIC SUPPORT

In the preceding chapters there have been only incidental references to that phase of Belgian relief which at the time was most widely known—the world-wide campaign for public support of the relief enterprise, and the donation of funds, food, and clothing. The various institutions and groups co-operating with or organized by the Commission collected over $52,000,000, an unprecedented accomplishment in the mobilization of charitable contributions. This very considerable sum, though it constituted only a little over five per cent of the total expenditures of the Commission, represented an exceedingly important contribution to the success of the work. It provided invaluable support before government subsidies were granted and indicated the strength of the world-wide moral support of the undertaking, which was an important factor in securing government assistance. This public support, which was of the utmost value to Hoover in his difficult negotiations with the belligerent governments, had its foundation in the knowledge of the conditions in Belgium and the Commission's objectives, broadcast through the newspaper and periodical press. It was greatly strengthened by the actual participation, in the relief campaign, of thousands of individuals identified in one way or another with over 4,000 committees associated in the Commission's appeal for Belgium.

In the organization of this appeal for general support of relief Hoover established certain general policies which were followed by the Commission throughout its life, and later by the American Relief Administration during the post-war reconstruction period. First, a definite program was announced based on the needs as reported by competent investigators, and in relation to resources available locally or from other sources. When conditions in respect to needs or resources changed, a new program was formulated on the basis of a resurvey of the situation.[1]

[1] In his first appeal Hoover laid down a definite program. The required relief imports were estimated at 80,000 tons per month costing about $5,000,000. Hoover recognized that this amount could not be secured each

Second, the Commission's appeals through the press and the co-operating committees consisted of statements of the ascertained need of relief, free from hysterical exaggeration; of the program to be undertaken; of what had been accomplished and the methods employed. In its public statements, as in its work in Belgium, the Commission observed the strictest neutrality except in this, that it steadfastly championed the interests of the Belgians who were the innocent victims of the war.

Third, the Commission made no attempt to dictate to the co-operating committees the methods they should employ in their solicitation of support. There were, altogether, over a hundred principal committees dealing directly with the Commission, with nearly 4,000 regional subcommittees. Seventy-five thousand persons as members of these committees or of the Commission itself were actively engaged in the mobilization of public support of relief. These collaborators represented many nations and races. In the British Empire the National Committee for Relief in Belgium, founded in April 1915, co-operated with existing committees or organized new ones in various parts of the Empire and turned over its receipts to the Commission. There were national or regional committees in the Argentine, in Italy, Spain, China, and elsewhere, having a similar relation to the C.R.B. In the United States, in addition to independent groups and institutions, the Commission secured the organization of committees in each state which maintained a direct contact with the New York office of the C.R.B.

Fourth, the Commission asked for and received volunteer service which constituted an enormous contribution to the relief, the value of which cannot be computed. This contribution included not only the services of men of wide experience and ability in the various departments of the Commission's activities, from the Chairmanship down and on the committees, but also the concessions and special privileges granted to the Commission by railway, steamship, telegraph, insurance, brokerage, and other business firms all over the world. The distinguished services which the Commission was able to command in all the spheres of its activity are in a great measure responsible for the success of its

month from gifts, and he therefore turned to other sources for half the required sums. Later, as is shown below, when the food needs were being largely met from other sources, the Commission asked for gift clothing.

operations, and specifically they are responsible for the fact that overhead and administrative expenses were less than one-half of one per cent.

Fifth, the Commission employed the economic and efficient methods of large-scale business operations with careful and detailed accounting for all contributions for relief from every source.[2]

1. *The First Appeals for Belgium. August–October 1914*

In August, as soon as the outside world became aware of the first tragic effects of the invasion on the Belgian people, many movements were started to bring aid to the refugees driven before the German advance. Thousands of these helpless people were received with solicitude in Holland, France, and the United Kingdom,[3] and the news of their plight stimulated charitable contributions from all over the world. Belgian diplomatic and consular officers encouraged the work of committees organized for this first phase of Belgian relief. Count de Lalaing and M. Havenith, the Ministers at London and Washington respectively, were particularly active; and energetic committees, principally in the British Empire and America, contributed substantial sums to the central committee, the Belgian Relief Fund, which had been founded under Belgian diplomatic auspices and was supported by the Belgian Government. In the early months of the war many refugee and emergency problems were met through sums supplied by the Belgian Government out of this fund, but until the formation of the Commission in October 1914 no recognized channel existed through which the growing distress in Belgium within the German lines could be alleviated. The Commission for Relief in Belgium thus came on to the scene in the midst of considerable though unco-ordinated charitable activity for Belgians. In organizing the solicitation of support during

[2] One of Hoover's first acts after the formation of the Commission was to secure the services of a firm of accountants of high standing. The records of the Commission show in detail the disposition of all funds and materials received from whatever source.

[3] The organization which was so effective in caring for Belgian refugees in England was the War Refugees Committee. This charitable committee acted in co-operation with the British Government. See *Report of the War Refugees Committee,* August 1916.

the first few months of its existence the Commission sought to direct the Belgian relief efforts already under way toward the distress inside the German lines; to co-ordinate relief enterprises whose objectives already were the mitigation of suffering among the poor in Belgium; and to stimulate the organization of new agencies of appeal toward this end.

Distinct from the activities centralized in the Belgian Relief Fund a few individuals and groups, principally in North America, made an early start in the collection of funds and food which eventually reached Belgium through the Commission's organization. Among these was "The Millers' Belgian Relief Movement." As early as August 1914 Mr. W. C. Edgar, editor of the *Northwestern Miller,* began a campaign to secure gifts in kind or money to send a cargo of flour to Belgium.[4] In September 1914 the *Christian Herald* of New York established the "Christian Herald Fund" for the benefit of the "widows and orphans of the war in Europe" and in October contributed the funds so collected toward the purchase of food for Belgium.[5] The first gift cargo[6] actually to reach Belgium from overseas sailed from Halifax, Nova Scotia, and reached Rotterdam on the S.S. "Tremorvah" on the 15th November 1914. The publicity and appeals incident to the formation of the Commission spurred the efforts of existing committees in the United States, and leaders in philanthropy established new committees. The Belgian Relief Fund in New York began an energetic campaign for food and money, and other communities formed similar organizations. On the 1st November the Rockefeller Foundation announced its intention of engaging in war relief

[4] Mr. Edgar encountered some delay in securing a boat, but his appeal for gift flour or funds was a complete success. The S.S. "Southpoint" with 6,000 tons of gift flour reached Belgium in February 1915. See comprehensive reports of "The Millers' Belgian Relief Movement," the *Northwestern Miller,* Minneapolis, Minn.

[5] In October Mr. Theodore Waters of the *Christian Herald* went to London and interviewed Ambassador Page and Mr. Hoover as to the best means of applying the money subscribed by readers of the periodical. As a result of these discussions Mr. Waters recommended that the contributions be turned over to the newly organized Commission for Relief in Belgium and this was immediately done.

[6] Consisted of donations from relief committees in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario. This and subsequent Canadian Belgian relief activities are described in the report *Relief Work for Victims of the War in Belgium,* 5th February 1915, H. Prud'homme, Honorary Treasurer, Montreal.

work in Europe and of immediately sending shipments of food to Belgium. The Foundation proceeded to buy food, charter ships, and dispatch cargoes, arranging also to furnish warehouse space and transportation for the Belgian Relief Fund of New York.

While these many appeals were being made, Hoover and his associates in London and the American diplomatic representatives in Great Britain, Belgium, and Germany were securing from the belligerents the guarantees which made relief in Belgium possible. The issues involved in these transactions and the position of the Commission as the sole channel through which supplies could be sent into the occupied territories were not, of course, generally understood, and the impression prevailed in America that the Commission was merely a London committee under Page's direction to forward supplies to Belgium. The American committees naturally did not send their contributions to the new Commission, but shipped their supplies to the American Embassy in London, the Legation at The Hague, or the Consulate at Rotterdam. The early public statements of the Commission were designed to clear up this confusion first by bringing pressure on the State Department to authorize American sponsorship of the enterprise, and second to make known the purpose of the Commission, and its position vis-à-vis the belligerent authorities, the Belgian distributing organization, and the American diplomatic officers.

DOCUMENT NO. 544

Dispatch[1] TO THE AMERICAN PRESS *entitled* "Feeding Brussels Depends on U.S."

LONDON, 6 October 1914

It has been put up to the State Department at Washington to decide whether 1,500 tons of provisions shall be shipped from England to Brussels for the scores of thousands of needy persons there.

Millard K. Shaler, an American, representing the Brussels Relief Committee, of which Brand Whitlock, the United States Minister, is the leader, is now here with funds to make the purchase. But the British Government is unwilling to permit the exportation unless it obtains some assurance that the provisions will not fall into the hands of the Germans.

[1] Published in the *New York Tribune* on the 7th October 1914. Philip Patchin, an American correspondent, cabled this and several later important dispatches concerning Shaler's mission to London to purchase food for Brussels.

Accordingly, the Government there states that if America assumes full responsibility and the goods are shipped from the American Embassy in London to the American Minister at Brussels, each package being clearly marked, the exportation will be permitted.

The Belgian Legation here so informed Ambassador Page today. Mr. Page communicated the facts to Washington, and is now awaiting a reply.

Mr. Shaler, who has been pressing the matter for more than a week, says the situation in Brussels is genuinely desperate, thousands of citizens needing food. Mr. Whitlock, who is taking the keenest interest in the matter, is the honorary president of the relief committee.

DOCUMENT NO. 545

Statement, HOOVER TO THE AMERICAN PRESS, *recommending that all American committees raising funds for Belgian relief should combine into one Commission*

LONDON, 14 October 1914

Mr. Herbert C. Hoover, Chairman of the Relief Committee, interviewed today concerning the generous American efforts to alleviate the distress among the Belgians, expressed the opinion that unless the application of funds thus raised be under the direction of persons familiar with existing conditions in Belgium there will be inevitably an overlapping and a great waste of energy and money.

"All the American relief workers should combine into one Commission," he said, "which should embrace all the American committees already established in Belgium and in London."[8]

DOCUMENT NO. 546

Statement[9] TO THE AMERICAN PRESS *outlining the plan of organization of the proposed Commission*

LONDON, 17 October 1914

There has been initiated here and referred to the Government at Washington a comprehensive scheme for the organization of an American Committee with the purpose of taking over the entire task of furnishing food and other supplies to the civil population of Belgium, so far as American relief measures are concerned, under the official supervision of the American Government.

[8] Extract from *New York Herald,* 15th October 1914.

[9] *New York Times,* 18th October 1914. This statement, as well as the previous one, was despatched by Ben S. Allen, one of the representatives of the Associated Press in London. Allen had secured permission of Melville Stone, head of the Associated Press, to concentrate on the Belgian cause, and for over two years his almost daily dispatches in the American press rendered invaluable service to Belgium.

Ambassador Page has referred the proposal to President Wilson and also to Brand Whitlock, Minister to Belgium, who, with Mr. Page, would head the committee.

It is believed that such a committee would furnish a solution of the exceedingly important and difficult problem of getting supplies to Brussels, for Washington could undoubtedly get sanction from all governments concerned, thus arranging for the best facilities for shipments. If supplies were shipped under the official protection of America, trouble from belligerents who might fear diversion of the supplies to other belligerents' armies would be obviated.

The further great problem of getting the Belgian refugees to return to Belgium would be simplified. Under the present circumstances thousands of refugees fear to return to cities held by the Germans. If they could go back under American protection they would doubtless gladly do so.

The committee would also systematize the expenditure of the Belgian relief funds now being gathered in America.

Mr. Page has consulted H. C. Hoover, head of the American Relief Committee here, which has done such valuable work. Mr. Hoover would be one of the leading members of the committee, which would also include prominent Americans in Brussels.

Under official auspices the supplies, which Belgium sorely needs, could be shipped direct from America to Belgium, avoiding the necessity of obtaining export permits from London, and thus saving much time.

The need of some such organization, having official support, is amply illustrated by the fate of the plan of the Relief Committee in Brussels, which Mr. Whitlock heads, for the purchase of supplies here for shipment to Brussels. A month ago M. K. Shaler left Brussels to purchase 1,500 tons of food. He has been here for three weeks waiting for permission to make shipments, which the British Government refuses unless the supplies go under an American diplomatic guarantee. It is understood here that Washington has referred the matter to Berlin, which fails to give an answer.

In the meantime the situation in Brussels grows desperate, while Mr. Shaler, with plenty of funds for purchases, waits for authority to make shipments.

It is considered here vitally necessary that Washington press Berlin for a guarantee of immunity of shipments against seizure.

DOCUMENT NO. 547

Statement,[40] HOOVER TO THE AMERICAN PRESS, *describing the organization of the C.R.B., its co-operation with the Belgian committee, and the immediate need of emergency relief*

LONDON, 22 October 1914

At a meeting at the American Embassy today of all who are concerned in Belgian relief, including Emile Francqui and Baron Lam-

[40] From an article in the *New York Sun*, 23d October 1914, entitled "Looks to America to Feed Belgium." See Document 16, chapter i.

bert of the Belgian committee, the organization of the American commission was completed. In addition to Ambassador Page and the American Ambassadors at Brussels and The Hague the Spanish Ambassadors at Brussels and London joined the commission as honorary chairmen.

The commission consists of Herbert C. Hoover, who was head of the American refugees' committee in London, chairman; Daniel Heineman of Brussels, vice-chairman; Mr. Graff of the American relief committee, treasurer; Millard K. Shaler, who came to London as representative of Minister Brand Whitlock, and Mr. Hulse of Brussels, secretaries. J. B. White is to have charge of the purchase and exportation of foodstuffs. Captain Lucey will have charge of the Rotterdam office.

Other members of the committee are Messrs. Hunsiker [of London] and Gibson of the American Legation at Brussels, Mr. Rickard, and the American Consuls at London, Antwerp, Brussels, Ostend, Liège, and Ghent. The commission will have an office in each of these cities, as it is intended to assist in provisioning all Belgium. It will co-operate fully with the Belgian committee.

Food to the value of $250,000 already has been bought in the name of Ambassador Page and Minister Whitlock, and arrangements have been made to begin its distribution to the local Belgian branches on October 26. The commission has received considerable sums in addition to the various Belgian funds.

Operations in the market today revealed that owing to Great Britain's demands the food stocks here may not be depleted. Because of the restrictions on the exportation of food it is extremely difficult to find even emergency provisions here, and supplies from America are even more imperatively needed than was originally expected. The difficulties become more embarrassing in view of the insistent requests received by the commission today for the expeditious despatch of the supplies already obtained.

The supplies available at the relief stations in Brussels Monday were believed to be sufficient to last until Saturday, and these were available only because a certain quantity of wheat was received from Antwerp. That source is now exhausted. The commission learns that the food supply at Charleroi is exhausted and that the people are subsisting entirely on potato soup.

A representative of the relief committee at Liège arrived here today to make representations of the urgency there in consequence of the non-arrival of supplies. It is obvious that with the scarcity of foodstuffs in Holland it is impossible to get supplies on that side for more than emergency service. A stream of supplies must be started from America if the Belgians are to be saved from famine.

The commission emphasizes that it is essential that supplies be sent by neutral ships, arrangements having been made with Great Britain that such shipments will not be interfered with in entering the ports designated by the commission. Germany has given ample assurance to the American Legation at Brussels that the importation and distribution of food to the civilians in Belgium will not be interrupted.

DOCUMENT NO. 548

Telegram, AMBASSADOR PAGE TO SECRETARY OF STATE, WASHINGTON, *announcing for the guidance of American committees that the Commission is the only agency for Belgian relief*

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
LONDON, 26 October 1914

To the Secretary of State, Washington

Your 389, October 24. The Commission of Belgian Relief working under diplomatic guidance of Spanish Ambassador here and myself has written assurance of the German military commander of Belgian territory held by the Germans that food sent them by this Commission will not be confiscated. So far as I know this assurance has not been given to anyone else who may send food. No food can be exported from England or Holland, but the Netherlands Government has given this Commission permission to distribute food, landed at Rotterdam through our agents, to people in Belgian territory. Since food cannot be bought on this side of the world, American committees should not send money but should confer with Hoover, Chairman of this Commission, care of this Embassy, regarding what kind of food to send and how to ship it. Commission has agents in every neighborhood in Belgium. It has in fact taken charge of practically all grocery stores. Money sent will be of no use. Food sent except through Commission may never reach Belgium or be confiscated.

PAGE

2. *The Organization of American Support. October 1914–February 1915*

Having secured the basic diplomatic guarantees, the Commission began at once to broaden and intensify the appeal for public support of relief by encouraging the creation of new committees and by collaboration with and co-ordination of the work of existing groups through an office of the Commission established in New York in November 1914. In order to bring new committees into activity Hoover urged friends in America and elsewhere to take the lead in their localities in the mobilization of support for relief. Telegrams were sent to state governors asking them to appoint committees or otherwise aid the campaign. Committees independently organized in October 1914 in Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, and Nebraska promptly associated themselves with the Commission. In November the states of California, Kansas, Louisiana, New Hampshire, and Oregon completed their organizations; Alabama, Georgia, North

Carolina followed in December, and early in 1915 other states—Delaware, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington. Up to the middle of January thirty-six states had contributed through state organizations. By way of stimulating the state campaigns, the Commission arranged to preserve the identity of these contributions by "state" ships, the cargoes of which were entirely or largely contributed by a state or groups of states.[11]

Year	Month	Ship	State
1914	December	S.S. "Camino"	California
	December	S.S. "St. Kentigern"	New York
1915	January	S.S. "Industry"	Pennsylvania
	January	S.S. "Hannah"	Kansas
	January	S.S. "Harpalyce"	New England
	January	S.S. "John Hardie"	Maryland
	January	S.S. "Lynorta"	Virginia *Literary Digest*
	January	S.S. "Washington"	Washington Oregon
	February	S.S. "Wabana"	Louisiana
	February	S.S. "Cranley"	California Oregon
	February	S.S. "Helena"	Georgia North Carolina South Carolina
	March	S.S. "Harpalyce"	New York
	March	S.S. "Strathfillan"	Maine
	March	S.S. "Lynorta"	New England
	March	S.S. "Glenshiel"	Missouri
	April	S.S. "St. Kentigern"	Pennsylvania
	April	S.S. "Strathgyle"	New England
	May	S.S. "St. Cecilia"	Canada
	October	S.S. "Pontoporos"	Connecticut
1916	January	S.S. "Celebes"	Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania
	February	S.S. "Lindenhall"	Indiana

With the spread of the relief campaign in the United States the Commission's New York office, set up in November 1914, rapidly became a very busy and important establishment. The fact that the Commission was the only agency authorized by the belligerent powers to deliver relief to Belgium, and Hoover's announcement that the Commission would pay all freight charges on food contributed in Amer-

[11] The following is a tabulation of C.R.B. cargoes which were identified as "State Ships." They were either fully loaded with gifts in kind or such space as remained was loaded with food purchased by the Commission.

ica[12] made the New York office responsible for arranging the transportation[13] of all gifts in kind and for the purchase and forwarding of supplies made possible by cash contributions. The extent of these operations necessitated the establishment of agencies in the principal markets and ports of America.

Another important function performed by the New York office was the preparation and distribution, to the press and co-operating organizations, of information relative to Belgian conditions and the progress of relief. The first public statements of this character issued by Hoover in London, notably his appeal of the 31st October[14] quoting King Albert's message asking for support of the Commission, were fully and prominently carried in the press. Requests for copy came from all parts of the United States from editors who were eager to aid the cause of relief and who recognized the news value of the Commission's activities. The Press Department of the New York office, under the direction of Will Irwin,[15] instituted daily and weekly news releases to papers and press associations and prepared pamphlets and handbooks for the use of the committees in the field. Weekly and monthly publications[16] carried articles on Belgian relief, and both magazines and newspapers donated advertising space for appeals for contributions for which the Press Depart-

[12] The first substantial sums turned over to Hoover by the Belgian Government were applied by him in part for the payment of freight. See chapter iv. Actually all freight and insurance was paid by the Commission. Thus funds subscribed for this purpose by the Rockefeller Foundation, and by individuals for "The Millers' Belgian Relief Movement" and the Philadelphia gift cargoes, were converted into food.

[13] Until December 1914 most American railroad companies carried Belgian gifts free of charge. The principal express companies not only posted placards in 35,000 of their offices throughout the country giving detailed instructions concerning the shipment of packages to the Commission's collecting centers but also granted the Commission a reduction of two-thirds in the usual tariff. Postmaster General Burleson permitted a similar placard to be posted in 65,000 postoffices covering parcel post gifts.

[14] Document 553.

[15] Mr. Irwin had been in Belgium during the first days of the German invasion and in London with Hoover in October 1914. On his return to America he took over the management of the Press Department, working in close co-operation with William A. M. Goode, who was engaged in similar work with Hoover in London.

[16] The following periodicals were among those which gave generous space to relief in the early days: *Bookman, Christian Herald, Collier's, Dun's Review, Independent, Ladies' Home Journal, Leslie's Weekly, Life, Literary Digest, Outlook, Town Topics, World's Work.*

ment furnished the copy. The primary purpose of the campaign through the press was to bring in contributions to the numerous collecting committees. A secondary purpose was the mobilization of general support of the whole relief enterprise.

One of the most effective appeals for Belgian relief was the "Famous Authors' Service" conceived and instituted by Irwin in co-operation with Goode in the New York and London offices of the Commission. Stories contributed by well-known authors[17] were syndicated and for over three months these stories formed a serial appeal in the leading papers of America.

Effective not only from the point of view of general publicity but in actual contributions were the campaigns carried on, in collaboration with the Commission, by individual publications. Among these were the "Queen of the Belgians Fund" and the "Belgian Flour Fund" organized and managed throughout by magazines which turned the proceeds into the channels of Belgian relief through the Commission. The first mentioned was an appeal to the women of America through the columns of the *Ladies' Home Journal* running for the months of January to March 1915, featuring a signed letter[18] from Queen Elisabeth. The "Belgian Flour Fund" was instituted by Mr. R. J. Cuddihy of the *Literary Digest* on the 28th November 1914. Contributions[19] by the readers of the *Literary Digest* were prompt and generous and from all over the world.

[17] Among those contributing were: Anthony Hope, John Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett, May Sinclair, A. E. W. Mason, George Bernard Shaw, Beatrice Harraden, Father Bernard Vaughan, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, Marie Corelli, Compton Mackenzie, Thomas Hardy. A number of these stories were reprinted in booklet form under the title *The Need of Belgium.*

[18] Document 554. Mr. Edward W. Bok had cabled Ambassador Page broaching the possibility of securing such a letter. The idea was enthusiastically followed up by Hoover and his associates in London. In addition to his many journeys between Brussels and London on Legation and Commission business, Hugh Gibson made a special trip on the 29th October 1914 to Belgian Army Headquarters where the King and Queen were. He not only secured the King's message to America (see Document 553) for the Commission, but actually wrote out the appeal to the women of America which the Queen signed. See Hugh Gibson, *A Journal from Our Legation in Belgium.*

[19] A total of $114,527.58 was subscribed by the 27th April 1915 when this first appeal on the part of the *Literary Digest* for Belgium closed. As will be seen, Mr. Cuddihy and Messrs. Funk and Wagnalls Company again put their resources back of the C.R.B. in 1916–17, in this instance for the children of Belgium.

DOCUMENT NO. 549

Telegram, Hoover to Mrs. Hoover, California, *giving information regarding Belgian needs and urging her to interest prominent people in their home state and on the Pacific Coast in sending state relief ships*

London, 26 October 1914

Mrs. Herbert Hoover
Alaska Commercial Building
San Francisco

Over one million people on bread line in Belgium at present moment with supplies estimated to last from one to three weeks. While we are securing some supplies here for emergency purposes real situation cannot be met without direct exports from states and we shall require upwards of twenty thousand tons foodstuffs monthly. Can you interest Anderson, Newhall, Hopkins, Lindley, Crocker, Grant, other prominent San Franciscans to present shipload food from California. If California will give us the foodstuffs we will pay freight and insurance. We should like five portions wheat, three portions beans, two portions peas, with bacon if obtainable. Must be shipped in neutral bottom consigned to us Rotterdam. Believe McNear would arrange shipping. Edgar has cabled him. If there is Belgian Relief Committee in California should co-operate. We want food not clothes as this is question starvation and Belgians can clothe themselves for the present. I can think of no greater contribution to this occasion of world's stress than a food ship from California and if possible one from Oregon and another from Washington. It might be pointed out that our Commission is largely Californian and that we should have support of our own state. Could also make same claim as to Oregon in my connection.

Herbert Hoover

DOCUMENT NO. 550

Telegram, Hoover to W. J. Chalmers, Chicago, *urging him to stimulate collections in Chicago*

London, 27 October 1914

Chalmers
Care Ashland, Chicago

The Belgian National Relief Committee in Belgium in desperation securing food supplies for their people have appealed to America procure and arrange for transportation and guardianship of foodstuffs in Belgium. American authorities have arranged for the necessary protection of various combatant powers and it has been put to us to organize this relief. We have at the request of the American Ambassadors in Europe formed a Commission for this work and are anxious to secure the co-operation of local committee in the principal centers of the United States. I would be glad to know if you would associate yourself with this effort and surround yourself with men of standing in Chicago as a branch of this committee who could undertake our work in that center. An English friend of ours has cabled

to Samuel Insull, Edison Buildings, Chicago, asking his assistance and would suggest you ask him co-operate with you also secure co-operation of any local Belgian relief committees. There are one million persons at present on bread line in Belgium and what we need is absolute food, not clothing. It is our feeling that the grain market of Chicago should present us, in the name of Chicago, with one or more cargoes, these to be composed of wheat, beans, peas, and as much bacon as possible. Shipments must be in neutral bottoms consigned to us in Rotterdam. We should like to be able to announce to world that Chicago is contributing the first cargo. Would like immediate reply as to whether you can personally interest yourself in this effort.

HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman American Commission
for Relief in Belgium

DOCUMENT NO. 551

Telegram, HOOVER TO LINDON W. BATES, NEW YORK, *requesting him to help in the formation of the New York section of the Commission and outlining his proposals to set up subcommittees throughout the United States*

LONDON, 28 October 1914

Lindon W. Bates
New York

Will you help me Belgian Relief New York section. See Sidney Ball. . . . I am proposing to set up subcommittees principal points in States to collect and ship food. I believe we will be able to raise necessary money from relief funds in Europe to pay for freight and insurance. If you will interest yourself I will send you any necessary cables of authority.

HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 552

Telegram, HOOVER TO BATES, *stating the desirability of working through existing committees if possible but also stating the impossibility of refusing the direct aid of friends*

LONDON, 30 October 1914

Lindon W. Bates
New York

We are having very considerable amounts of money from various parts of the United States. Although we do not wish to conflict with existing Belgian relief committees the position we are confronted with is so critical that we cannot refuse to accept offers of local friends and others to work on our behalf. Think it probable work through existing machinery so far as possible. Would like you to see the principal Belgian relief committees in the States and ask them if they will agree to receive deposits which may be sent by our

friends, such deposits to be held by them to our order and which we will devote to the absolute purchase of food in the United States. Matter is urgent.

HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 553

Statement,[20] HOOVER TO THE AMERICAN PRESS, *in which he quotes a message from King Albert and asks the American newspapers to open subscriptions. He states the needs as 80,000 tons each month and sets the charitable funds necessary as $2,500,000 monthly*

LONDON, 31 October 1914

Albert, King of the Belgians, has asked the American people through the American Commission for Relief in Belgium to help feed his starving people during the coming winter.

The King's message, written under fire in the battle in Belgium, follows:

"I am informed that American officials and citizens in Belgium and England are working to save my people from the horrors of the famine which now threaten them. It is a great comfort to me in this hour of sorrow and misfortune to feel that your great-hearted, disinterested people is directing its efforts to relieving the distress of the unoffending civilian population of my country.

"Despite all that can be done, the suffering in the coming winter will be terrible, but the burden we must bear will be lightened if my people can be spared the pangs of hunger with its frightful consequences of disease and violence.

"I confidently hope that the appeal of the American Commission will meet with a generous response. The whole hearted friendship of America shown my people at this time always will be a precious memory.

"ALBERT"

The American Commission for Relief in Belgium is an official body recognized by the various Governments for the transmission of foodstuffs into Belgium. It is the only channel through which food can be introduced into Belgium, and by its association with a committee in Belgium, has the only efficient agency for the distribution of food within that country. H. C. Hoover, Chairman of the Commission, which has headquarters in London, makes the following appeal to all American newspapers:

7,000,000 TO FEED

"We have received reports from members of this Commission who were sent into Belgium. They have the assistance of the National Committee of Relief and its branches throughout Belgium, together with the help of the American Ministers and Consuls and local officials. Their reports show that there are still some 7,000,000 people in Belgium. In many centres the people are receiving an allowance of a little more than three ounces of flour per capita daily.

[20] *New York Times,* 1st November 1914.

"This is not a question of charity or relief to the chronic poor; it is a question of feeding an entire population. The situation affects the wealthy and well-to-do as well as the poor. It touches every home in Belgium. Our experts calculate that in order to avoid actual starvation Belgium must have every month a minimum of 60,000 tons of wheat, 15,000 tons of corn, 5,000 tons of peas or beans, and a limited amount of bacon or lard.

"This will allow rations of ten ounces per capita daily, which is about half the usual soldier's ration. All this will cost $4,000,000 or $5,000,000 monthly. There is no money in Belgium. The whole credit machinery has ceased. Eighty per cent of the people are unemployed.

Need $2,500,000 a Month

"A plan may be devised whereby such Belgians as possess property may give obligations to pay when the war ends, but even if we could realize on these obligations we must still have at least $2,500,000 monthly in food or money with which to buy it. That these figures are no exaggeration is proved by the fact that Belgian imports in normal times average 230,000 tons of cereals monthly; this, together with its own production, which, with accumulations, is now exhausted.

"During the past week we have received and expended in emergency food $600,000, and yet this is only four days' supply. The problem is immediate. The Belgians are helping themselves, but they can do little. The British and French are under such strain that they also can do little. Besides, these nations, together with the Dutch, have a million refugees on their hands. Americans must feed Belgium this winter. There never was such a call on American charity, and there never was a famine emergency so great.

"This committee and its distributing agency, The Belgian Committee, is composed entirely of volunteers, and every dollar represents actual food, without any organization expenses. It is our earnest hope that all funds raised for Belgium relief in the United States will be translated into actual food and shipped through the Commission.

"Will you, therefore, in the interests of humanity, open a subscription among your readers, ear-marked, 'For the Sole Purpose of Purchasing and Transporting Food.' Every dollar so raised will be used to purchase food in the United States. Information as to what centres and what relief agencies in the United States will undertake the purchase and dispatch will be cabled later."

DOCUMENT NO. 554

Message, Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth to the Womanhood of America

Belgian Army Headquarters
29 October 1914

I have learned with gratification of the noble and effective work being done by American citizens and officials on behalf of my

stricken people. I confidently hope that their efforts will receive that ungrudging support which we have learned to expect from the generous womanhood of America.

We mothers of Belgium no less than the mothers of America have for generations instilled in our children the instincts and the love of peace. We asked no greater boon than to live in peace and friendship with all the world. We have provoked no war, yet in defence of our hearthstones, our country has been laid waste from end to end.

The flow of commerce has ceased and my people are faced with famine. The terrors of starvation with its consequences of disease and violence menace the unoffending civilian population—the aged, the infirm, the women, and the children.

American officials and citizens in Belgium and England, alive to their country's traditions, have created an organization under the protection of their Government and are already sending food to my people. I hope that they may receive the fullest sympathy and aid from every side.

I need not say that I and my people shall always hold in grateful remembrance the proven friendship of America in this hour of need.

(Signed) ELISABETH

DOCUMENT NO. 555

Telegram, HOOVER TO MRS. LINDON BATES, NEW YORK, *asking her to undertake the formation of a women's organization in America*

LONDON, 31 October 1914

Mrs. Lindon Bates
New York

The American Commission for Relief in Belgium which has been set up officially by the American Ambassadors to execute their international agreements for the provisioning of Belgium and which embraces American Ambassadors as honorary chairmen, the American Consuls and American residents of England and Belgium as members, would like to have you undertake the formation of a great group of American women who would support us in securing food or money for the Belgian people. It is certain that the entire population of seven million are on the verge of famine and that eighty thousand tons of cereals per month is the absolute minimum upon which body and soul can be kept together and this provides a ration of but ten ounces per capita per diem. The situation is one of the greatest gravity. We have sent an appeal to the American press to open subscriptions for our purposes all of which subscriptions we want translated into actual foodstuffs from the United States. We would be grateful for the help of yourself and all those women who rightly should come to your support.

HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman

DOCUMENT NO. 556

Telegram, HOOVER TO STATE GOVERNORS,[21] *asking them to interest themselves in the collection of food for Belgium and suggesting the possibility of furnishing state ships*

LONDON, 2 November 1914

The Governor of Kansas

Would you be good enough to interest yourself in the critical situation which exists amongst the people in Belgium to the extent of either through official agencies or through the creation of some committee for the purpose to collect foodstuffs or money within your State on behalf of these people, such foodstuffs to consist of cereals, bacon or ham. It would be a matter of great gratification if the people of your State could furnish one or more shiploads of foodstuffs to be known as the Kansas ships. If you could see your way to take in hand this beneficent work we will use every influence we can bring to bear to have handed over to you all the funds subscribed within your State for Belgian relief that they may be translated entirely into foodstuffs. We can arrange for the reception of such food on the Atlantic seaboard and its transportation and distribution in Belgium.

HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman, Commission for Relief in Belgium

DOCUMENT NO. 557

Telegram, HOOVER TO W. C. EDGAR, *regarding the latter's plan for collecting a shipload of flour*

LONDON, 3 November 1914

William C. Edgar
Northwestern Miller
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Your letter of October twenty-first to Mr. Page has been handed to us. There is no more practical and humane effort which could be undertaken than the provision shipload food for the Belgian people in this hour of their misery. This Commission will be delighted to take charge of such ship and distribute its cargo into hands of the most efficiently organized local relief committees in Belgium which are operating under the protection of members of this Commission. Before arrival of your letter we had cabled the Governor of Minnesota asking him secure the organization of such an effort within that State. Would you kindly communicate with him so that such beneficent efforts may not overlap.

HERBERT HOOVER

[21] Similar telegrams were sent to the governors of Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

DOCUMENT NO. 558

Telegram,[22] HOOVER TO STATE GOVERNORS, *asking them to assist in the collection of money for Belgium*

LONDON, 9 November 1914

Would you be good enough to interest yourself in the critical situation which exists amongst the civil population of Belgium to the extent either through official channels or through the creation or stimulation of some existing channel, of making collection in your State on behalf of these people. All such monies will be devoted by this Commission to the purchase of foodstuffs in the United States and this Commission has been endowed with a fund for the sole purpose of paying for the transport of such foodstuffs to the people of Belgium so that every dollar secured will be represented by actual food.

HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman, Commission for Relief in Belgium

DOCUMENT NO. 559

Telegram, HOOVER TO BELGIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON, *suggesting procedure to make effective the desire of the Belgian Government that gifts collected by committees, with which the Minister was associated, should be forwarded through the Commission*

LONDON, 3 November 1914

His Excellency, The Belgian Minister
Washington, D.C.

We are advised from the Belgian Minister of Finance that his Government had expressed the wish to you that all funds collected by the committee with which you are associated in the United States should be devoted exclusively to the purchase of foodstuffs through and in co-operation with this Commission, we in turn delivering such foodstuffs in the hands of the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation. We have direct offers of foodstuffs and money from many committees and local bodies throughout United States. It is our desire to prevent overlapping and we should like to suggest to you that as a matter of practical work you should hold the funds at your disposal subject to our recommendation as to their application so that they can be used to supplement various local funds and supplies thus enabling us to concentrate upon complete cagoes and thus facilitate clearance and delivery. We should be glad if you could advise us of the approximate amount of the funds which you have available. The New York Belgian Relief Committee has undertaken to contribute 150,000 dollars towards a cargo costing approximately 300,000 dollars. We would be glad if you could appropriate 150,000 dollars to complete this cargo, in which case would you kindly remit it to Messrs. DeForest and Ryan, Purchasing Subcommittee of that or-

[22] Sent to the governors of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming.

ganization, New York. Also we have other instances of same character now developing. Address

HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman

DOCUMENT NO. 560

Telegram, BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TO THE BELGIAN MINISTER, WASHINGTON, *instructing him to forward gifts collected by committees with which he is associated through the Commission*

LONDON, 19 November 1914

His Excellency, The Belgian Minister
Washington

Comité National Secours in Belgium, very important Belgian body in Brussels, agreed to and subsidized by me, has as executive agent The Commission for Relief in Belgium—President, Hoover—organized with great efficiency and devotedness under protection of neutral states, purchases and transports for the Comité. This Commission chosen by American and Spanish Ambassadors is strongly supported by them. Think desirable that whilst respecting initiative try have transport and distribution Belgium centralized as much as possible through Commission and Comité National specially organized for that. Each American group, especially Rockefeller, should purchase with their funds, leaving care transport into district depots of Comité National to Commission Hoover which disposes funds for transport and has obtained from German authorities guarantees for free passage and nonrequisition. Only means of securing methodical adequate distribution for needs different districts which meet with enormous administrative and material difficulties. Understand a *modus vivendi* arranged between Rockefeller Foundation and Bates representing Commission. Encourage all efforts in view of combined action being indispensable. Have appointed Chevalier Carton de Wiart to represent me on London Commission. If necessary communicate with him care Legation London.

BERRYER[23]

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 561

Telegram, PAGE TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, *requesting that the Governor of Iowa be informed that the Commission is the only agency for forwarding and distribution of relief*

LONDON, 6 November 1914

Secretary of State
Washington

1015. Please telegraph following to Governor of Iowa. At Chamberlain's[24] request I give you following information.

[23] Minister of Interior of Belgian Government then at Havre. M. Berryer after an interview with Hoover in London sent this dispatch to strengthen the previously cabled instructions to the Belgian Minister.

[24] D. S. Chamberlain, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Belgian Relief Association of Iowa.

The Commission for Relief in Belgium is the only agency that has machinery for distribution of food in Belgium. It has the benefit of complete diplomatic arrangements made with all belligerent governments by American Ambassador and Ministers and Consuls in Holland and Belgium and written guarantee of German military governor of Belgium that food will be permitted to pass all boundaries and will not be confiscated. The Commission distributes all contributions made by governments and food sent from all neutral countries. It works with the only committee in Belgium for local distribution in every community. No cargo safe unless properly shipped and consigned. All shipping directions given by Hoover, London Chairman of Commission, three London Wall Buildings. Commission commands me to express heartfelt thanks.

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, LONDON

DOCUMENT NO. 562

Telegram, WM. H. CROCKER TO HOOVER, *regarding proposed gift cargo from California*

SAN FRANCISCO, 7 November 1914

Herbert C. Hoover
London

Large public meeting today Merchants' Exchange. Speakers Bishop Hanna, Bishop Nichols, Mayor Rolph, and others. Over one hundred thousand dollars cash and produce pledged. Entire State enthusiastically working. A shipload of food supplies assured from California early shipment . . .

WM. H. CROCKER
Chairman

DOCUMENT NO. 563

Telegram, HOOVER TO BATES, *instructing him to organize a New York office of the Commission to handle shipping and transport questions, and to co-operate with existing charitable committees*

LONDON, 11 November 1914

Lindon Bates
New York

We have definite assurances ample funds payment transport all foodstuffs offered us any center in world to Belgium. Will you, McCarter, Will Irwin and, if agreeable, J. B. White, open for us office New York to handle shipping and transport questions from that end much on lines laid down your cable. We wish avoid overlapping existing committees in soliciting money but offer all agencies free transport for any foodstuffs they provide and stimulate collection actual foodstuffs all centers. It is most desirable have express railway companies agree collect deliver free seaboard. If desirable can get American Express officials this side put it up strongly their organization. We propose put on regular weekly steamers and for your confidential information we have large funds with which supplement any failure of charity. You need engage competent staff arrange

warehousing and we will mutually arrange shipping. If you agree we propose to announce it is not our policy to enter field for collection moneys already covered by local organizations, our one desire being place our machinery for free transport foodstuffs in close cooperation all existing organizations and persons desirous presenting food and have opened office New York this purpose. We consider our press propaganda is doing fine service in stimulating results to all Belgian relief organizations. Have no desire whatever to manage their business or take their credit. Have single idea delivering food into Belgium merely and not dream about it. November second on Ambassador's approval we telegraphed every governor asking him create or stimulate local organizations collect food transportation of which we undertake free. Ships to be named after various states. This appeal created most gratifying responses. One critical fact evident from every quarter is that West and Middle West will not be dominated by or filter through the Red Cross, the New York Relief Committee, or Rockefeller Foundation. If these organizations wish to co-operate closely with us we shall be delighted. They cannot enter Belgium without us. Psychologically we can produce more food by strong punch of cable from scene of action than any amount appeals New York. We wish keenly co-operate with the New York Committee and we especially wish co-operate Rockefeller Foundation. Have offered them right nominate member Commission at this end and in New York. Am informed will have no difficulty coming to co-operative arrangements on arrival of their representative here. Do not mention our large resources as it would dry rills of charity. Will Irwin will devote entire time our propaganda. Is best press agent in world. He will communicate with you and would attach himself New York office and should go to work stimulating our Governor and newspaper funds for collecting actual food. We would propose you add other useful persons to your members New York to be mutually agreed by us. All of you to be actual members this Commission appointed by the American Ambassadors Europe.

HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 564

Telegram, BERT, POTTER & HUGHES, LONDON, TO NORTON, LILLY & COMPANY, NEW YORK, *contributing their services to the Commission without remuneration*

LONDON, 13 November 1914

Norton, Lilly & Company
New York

We have informed American Commission for Relief in Belgium that you will act as their shipping agents in New York without remuneration.[25] We are undertaking same duties in London.

HUGHES

[25] This is an early instance of voluntary service, concessions, and special privileges granted the Relief Commission by individuals and by railway, steamship, telegraph, insurance, and brokerage companies all over the world.

DOCUMENT NO. 565

Extract of letter,[26] HOOVER TO FRANCQUI, *giving a résumé of the position in America*

LONDON, 14 November 1914

Emile Francqui, Esq.
Brussels

MY DEAR FRANCQUI:

. . . . . .

The following résumé of the position in America may interest you.

We have carried on, with the assistance of practically the whole of the American press, an enormous propaganda on the subject of the Belgian people. We have cabled to all associations of whom we could hear, stimulating them as to position. We have cabled to the governors of every state asking them to see that such an association was set up in their territory and we have so far the following results:

The Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco, at the instance of my wife who happened to be there, has collected money with which they have purchased actual foodstuffs to the amount of 5,000 tons and have chartered the ship "Camino" which sails November 30th for Rotterdam.

The Seattle Chamber of Commerce are in progress with the provision of a cargo, and as friends of ours were raising a fund in the state of Idaho we have asked these people to combine to ensure a large ship full.

In the state of Oregon we have a good friend at work but at present can report no definite results.

In the state of Kansas, Ex-Governor Stubbs has inaugurated an active campaign for the collection of foodstuffs and is organizing an efficient committee for taking the matter in hand.

In the state of Iowa Mr. Chamberlain is organizing a complete cargo of maize which is the chief product of that state.

In the state of Minnesota Mr. Edgar, the editor of a trade journal called the *Northwestern Miller* has got the millers in the northern part of the Mississippi Valley all hard at work and he assures us that he will secure at least 9,000 tons of flour and is making the first shipment from Philadelphia about the end of November.

The Philadelphia Belgian Relief Committee in co-operation with the *Ladies' Home Journal* (for which paper we obtained an autograph letter from the Queen of the Belgians to further the appeal) have already despatched on the 11th November to us the S.S. "Thelma" carrying 2,900 tons of cereals.

The Rockefeller Foundation has despatched the S.S. "Massapequa" carrying 4,000 tons on November 4th and we have bought a cargo of 4,000 tons which is being shipped on the S.S. "Terschelling" which sailed from New York on the 11th November.

[26] This letter is given in full as Document 26, chapter ii.

The people of Nova Scotia have already landed in Rotterdam the steamer "Tremorvah" carrying about 2,100 tons of foodstuffs and a lot of clothes. They have now despatched the S.S. "Bankadra" which sailed from Halifax on the 13th instant with 3,000 tons.

The people of Ottawa, Canada, are despatching approximately 4,000 tons at an early date.

The New York Relief Committee are presumably despatching a cargo at an early date, and we have organizations getting on definitely in Spain, Italy, British Columbia, North Carolina, Maine, and Virginia.

We have opened an office in New York and have advised the American public generally that our New York office will undertake the free transportation of foodstuffs into Belgium.

We are taking some steamers on time charter for regular trips across the Atlantic, and we are expecting to supplement the irregular supplies of gift food by purchases to keep these steamers employed.

We have organized a Women's Division of the American Commission in New York and have the co-operation of all of the women's clubs and societies in the United States, and tomorrow they are issuing an appeal to all of these club members to get on pushing food into the hands of the local organizations.

In our London office we are conducting three Commissions: i.e., the American Commission, the Spanish Commission, and the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation; and we expect to have the Italian Commission launched next week. We combine representatives of all of these Commissions into the general organization which we style simply "The Commission for Relief in Belgium," which is dealing with all of the minor points of international complexity.

We have secured the assistance of the two largest shipping firms in England, and they have agreed to handle the whole of our shipping problems for absolutely no cost whatever for commissions or agency charges or anything of that nature, and they have placed one of their most expert men in our office and at our elbow. In like manner we have secured the voluntary services of one of the largest food firms dealing on the Baltic, who are giving us their services on exactly the same terms. We have thought it much better that we should not only take the expert advice and the responsible management of such agencies as this but also it affords some measure of protection to us which might not exist if we endeavored by our own individual effort to arrange such matters as charters and food purchases. These gentlemen have taken the greatest possible interest in the work which we are endeavoring to do and are giving us most extraordinary services.

As an indication of such services you will realize that under the terms of the London Shipping, Food, and Insurance Exchanges these people cannot operate without charging commissions, but they are in this case making subscriptions to our funds of amounts equivalent to such commissions.

. . . . . .

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 566

Telegram, HOOVER TO THE "LITERARY DIGEST," *regarding the "Belgian Flour Fund."*

LONDON, 9 January 1915

The "Literary Digest"
New York

Have noticed splendid response of your readers to appeal enormous sufferings of Belgians. I earnestly urge you to continue your efforts. If you could send one hundred thousand barrels instead of twenty thousand it would be infinitely welcome. The situation is an appalling one.

HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 567

Telegram, HOOVER TO EX-GOVERNOR W. R. STUBBS, *conveying the gratitude of Belgium for the gift relief cargo from Kansas.*[27]

LONDON, 6 February 1915

W. R. Stubbs
Topeka, Kansas

I am asked to convey to the people of the State of Kansas and to yourself the heartfelt gratitude of Belgium for the magnificent generosity they have displayed to a suffering nation. The Kansas cargo of relief, which arrived in the nick of time, has already been distributed in the Provinces of Antwerp, Brabant, East and West Flanders, Hainaut, Liège, Limbourg and Namur. Ex-Congressman Scott accompanied some of the flour to Brussels. The situation remains acute and if the supply of food is diminished Belgium will starve. We know that Kansas never turned a deaf ear to a people in distress.

HOOVER
Chairman, Commission for Relief

3. *Public Support from the British Empire and Elsewhere. 1914–1918*

It was not until the spring of 1915 that Hoover took steps to organize a central committee for the mobilization of support of Belgian relief in the British Empire. In the meantime, however, the facts of the situation in Belgium and the formation of the Commission under the auspices of the American and Spanish Ambassadors in London were given

[27] The Commission was prompt to advise the collecting committees in the United States, Canada, Argentine, Australasia, etc., of the arrival and distribution of gift cargoes or part cargoes collected by them.

wide publicity in the British press, and British citizens, despite the many calls of local charities, contributed considerable sums to the Commission. At the outset the British Government gave £100,000, and this official indication of approval of the neutral committee for Belgian relief encouraged the public to follow suit. In November the Belgian Government handed over to the Commission £100,000 drawn from the Belgian Relief Fund, whose resources were largely contributions from the British Empire and America. As has been mentioned, the first gift cargo to arrive in Rotterdam came from Nova Scotia and others shortly followed,[28] the results of widespread activity throughout Canada. In December 1914 the Belgian Minister in London turned over to Hoover a check for £60,000, the first substantial contribution for the Commission from Australia and New Zealand and the forerunner of a series of generous gifts from Australasia which continued during the war. By April 1915 the Commission had received over £750,000 in charity from British Empire sources and in addition committees, both self-constituted and inspired through cables from the Commission's London office, were sending in contributions from Holland, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, Spain, China, and elsewhere.

To centralize the appeals throughout the British Empire the Commission in April 1915 decided to ask a number of men prominent in English public life to raise funds for the charitable side of its work, and the National Committee for Relief in Belgium[29] was the result. This Committee took over from the Commission the stimulation and collection of charity from British Empire sources. Differing from the policy adopted in America, donations of cash[30] were requested and the response throughout the British Empire was magnificent.[31]

[28] The S.S. "Tremorvah" from Halifax in November was followed by gift cargoes from Canada on the S.S's. "Doric," "Calcutta," "Trenglos," "St. Cecilia," "Gothland," to the total value of $1,500,000.

[29] Organized under high patronage under the active direction of the Duke of Norfolk and Shirley Benn, M.P. (later Sir Shirley Benn), with W. A. M. Goode (later Sir William Goode) as Honorary Secretary.

[30] In 1918, when the Commission appealed for clothing in America, the British Committee asked for clothing also with excellent results.

[31] The tables at the end of this chapter include a summary of collections by the National Committee for Relief in Belgium. Complete details with list of contributing areas are given in Sir William Goode, K.B.E., *The National Committee for Relief in Belgium 1915–1919.*

DOCUMENT NO. 568

Telegram, HOOVER TO GELASIO CAETANI, *requesting him to aid in the formation of an Italian Belgian relief committee*[32]

LONDON, 6 November 1914

Signor Gelasio Caetani
Rome

We have now decided make Commission to Belgium international. Spanish Ambassador has joined as one of our Honorary Chairmen and is giving us active diplomatic and financial assistance from Spain. I would like to have a meeting to discuss with you question of joining Italians to this effort which has now reached gigantic proportions as it is going to be a problem of feeding entire population.

HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 569

Telegram, HOOVER TO HALIFAX "MORNING CHRONICLE," *describing Belgian situation and appealing for continued Canadian contributions*

LONDON, 2 December 1914

The "Morning Chronicle"
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Commission for Relief in Belgium composed of representatives United States, Italy, Spain acting under authority all belligerent Governments desire express their appreciation Canada's magnificent response to Belgium's cry of distress. . . . Thousands of tons of supplies, including those brought by the "Tremorvah" have already been distributed, but every mail brings pitiful requests for assistance from small and large Belgian villages where the misery of the people is accentuated by the shortage of food, the lack of fuel and the spectre of famine. To supply the actual necessities of the seven million people remaining in Belgium reliable authorities estimate that eighty thousand tons of foodstuffs a month will be required throughout the winter. What most needed are wheat, flour, corn, corn meal, beans, peas, potatoes, biscuits, bacon and money. The freight and all shipping expenses on every cargo of such supplies will gladly be paid by the Commission for Relief who will also pay all expenses incurred in the actual distribution of the supplies in Belgium. Canada with her great resources is in a splendid position to help. She has already done much but we do not hesitate in these appalling circumstances to ask her to do more.

HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman

[32] The Italian committee which was shortly organized was called "Comitato Nazionale Italiano per i soccorsi alle vittime della guerra nel Belgio," with Onorato Caetani, Duke of Sermoneta, as active president.

DOCUMENT NO. 570

Letter, DE LALAING TO HOOVER, *enclosing £60,000 from New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand*

LÉGATION DE BELGIQUE [LONDON]
21 December 1914

DEAR MR. HOOVER:

I have very great pleasure in enclosing a cheque for £60,000—representing contributions from New South Wales, Queensland and New Zealand to the Belgian Relief fund.

The donors expressed the wish, through the Agent General for New South Wales, Hon. Sir T. A. Coghlan, that this sum should be employed to alleviate distress in Belgium through the medium of the United States Embassy, so I forward it to you as Chairman of the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

Yours sincerely
(Signed) LALAING

DOCUMENT NO. 571

Telegram, HOOVER TO DE BRUYN, *requesting assistance in forming Argentine committee*[33] *for Belgian relief*

LONDON, 19 January 1915

Casimiro de Bruyn
Buenos Aires
Argentine Republic

This Commission . . . was formed to carry out an international agreement with the belligerent powers, permitting the supply of food to the seven million people still in Belgium, who are absolutely destitute of foodstuffs except through the efforts of this Commission. . . . We have had most generous support from American, Spanish, Canadian, Australian and Belgian peoples but we fear we have taxed these sources to their uttermost limit. Furthermore the supply of foodstuffs from these quarters now being rapidly exhausted. We are therefore compelled to turn to Argentine in hope that from their bountiful harvest they will help. We have been recommended to consult you as to best manner this work could be undertaken, and we have in mind the creation of strong Argentine Committee who would be represented this Commission. . . . We earnestly ask your advice and counsel. Cable Hoover, Chairman Commission for Relief in Belgium.

[33] The Argentine Belgian Relief Committee was officially organized in February 1915 with Casimiro de Bruyn as vice-chairman and treasurer. In addition to charitable collection by the committee the Argentine Government made a substantial contribution, bringing the total to over $200,000, including 9,000 tons of maize.

DOCUMENT NO. 572

Extracts of Appeal,[34] C.R.B. TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, *for continued support to Belgian relief*

LONDON, 19 February 1915

TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

In the name of seven million Belgians, still in Belgium and unable to help themselves, we appeal for help to Australia and New Zealand. Faced with a situation from which there is no escape, deprived of liberty and freedom, the Belgians only ask for enough bread to keep themselves alive.

. . . . . .

The people of Australia and New Zealand have set the world a magnificent example by the aid which they have already contributed. But more, much more is needed. To keep the body and soul of the Belgian nation together £1,125,000 must be provided every month.

. . . . . .

In the midst of patriotic support of Empire, in the turmoil of war, the people of Australia and New Zealand have magnanimously proved that their eyes and hearts are open to the misery of Belgium. With the chivalry of a virile young nation they have spontaneously come to the support of the little race that has almost been wiped from its historic place on the map of Europe. Had it been otherwise we should not have ventured to make this appeal. Now we are emboldened to ask for still greater efforts, still more organised assistance, because we believe that Australia and New Zealand only measure their activities by the emergency which confronts them and are able to overcome difficulties which might well shock an older people into tragic inactivity.

. . . . . .

Will the people of Australia and New Zealand give £75,000 a month or food equivalent to that amount? We appeal in confidence to a people who have so lately proved that bravery in war is not inconsistent with a tender, grateful heart.

(Signed)

ERNEST SOLVAY,
Chairman, Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation, Brussels

EMILE FRANCQUI,
Chairman, Comité National, Brussels

HERBERT HOOVER,
Chairman, Commission for Relief in Belgium, London

[34] This first direct appeal by the Commission to Australasia was widely published in these countries beginning with the 22d February 1915.

DOCUMENT NO. 573

Extracts of Report of the National Committee for Relief in Belgium by Sir William Goode, K.B.E.

On April 27th, 1915, the first direct appeal was made to the United Kingdom through the medium of the National Committee for Relief in Belgium, which, at the suggestion of Mr. Hoover and with the approval of His Majesty's Government, I had the honour to organise. The Lord Mayor of London, as Chairman, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Bourne, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the President of the Free Church Council, the Chief Rabbi, the Duke of Norfolk, Lords Lansdowne, Rosebery, and Bryce, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., and Mr. John Redmond, M.P., with Mr. A. Shirley Benn, M.P., as Hon. Treasurer, and myself as Hon. Secretary, signed the first call issued for help in England. The Belgian Minister in London was an honorary member of the National Committee, which was formed not only to provide money then required desperately by the C.R.B., but to act as a central depository for all benevolent contributions from the British Empire and to co-ordinate activities already existing. Those who signed the first appeal nominated the following representatives to act on their behalf as an Executive Council:

The Duke of Norfolk, K.G., *Chairman*
Mr. A. Shirley Benn, M.P., *Deputy Chairman*
The Rt. Rev. The Lord Bishop of Rochester
The Rt. Rev. Monsignor M. E. Carton de Wiart
The Hon. Sir Peter McBride
Sir John Knill, *Bart.*
Sir Ernest Hatch, *Bart.*
Mr. Percy Alden, M.P.
Mr. W. Hudson, M.P.
Mr. Patrick O'Brien, M.P.
Mr. W. A. M. Goode, *Hon. Secretary*

. . . . . .

His Majesty King George inaugurated the National Committee's fund with a donation of £500 on April 27th, 1915, and subsequently duplicated this amount. The Queen, Queen Alexandra, and other members of the British Royal Family also gave generous support. The total collected from April 27th, 1915, to June 1st, 1917, solely from the British Empire, was £2,411,222 18*s.* 2*d.* To this must be added £52,203 collected in New Zealand and now held by the New Zealand High Commissioner to await requirements; £44,000, collected on behalf of the National Committee in New South Wales, but handed to the King of the Belgians by the Premier of New South Wales after June 1st, 1917; and £25,308 12*s.* 10*d.* collected for the National Committee by the Canadian Committee, and held to purchase foodstuffs in that Dominion at such time as the Commission may need them. The total, therefore, raised by the National Committee for Relief in Belgium, solely from British sources, during the twenty-five months of its active existence was £2,532,734 11*s.*, or an average of over £100,000 per month.

4. *The Reorganization of American Support. May–August 1915*

During the autumn and winter months of 1914–1915 while the appeals for public support were being made, Hoover was engaged in the negotiations by which in the spring of 1915 he secured monthly subsidies for relief from the Allied Governments.[35] The sums thus received assured a financial foundation for the relief and the Commission could look ahead with some confidence toward supplying a portion of the needs of Belgium. The sums advanced, however, were not only inadequate to cover the full requirements but were in the nature of exchange, in that the relief organization had to turn back, to specified channels, equivalent funds within Belgium. In order to accomplish this, food bought with subsidies in gold was sold in Belgium to those who were able to pay, and the paper money thus accumulated was applied through the relief organization to liquidate state indebtedness such as pensions, doles to state railway workers, support of state institutions, separation allowances, etc. To be sure a vast number of individuals who would otherwise have been completely destitute were thus enabled to pay for their rations, but there existed a large and growing number of destitute who were entirely outside this circle. These were entirely dependent upon the charity of the world and it was for them that the Commission continued to appeal.

The situation was misunderstood in America[36] largely through the unfortunate wording of some independent announcements in the American press which led the public to believe that the entire responsibility for Belgian relief had been shouldered by the Allied Governments.

There were, moreover, other reasons for a slackening in public interest in relief. Independent committees and magazines which had set definite objectives in their campaigns either relaxed their efforts or terminated their activities on a closing date previously announced. The torpedoing of the "Lusitania"[37] and the consequent crisis in relations between

[35] See chapter iv. The first monthly subsidy was received in March 1915.

[36] No such misunderstanding existed elsewhere, as the Commission had just been successful in inspiring the formation of the National Committee for Relief in Belgium and the support from British Empire sources was immediate and generous.

[37] On the 7th May 1915.

Germany and the United States completely absorbed the interest of the American public. In the circumstances there was no opening for arousing interest in Belgian relief, and the Commission, whose existence as a neutral organization hung in the balance during the diplomatic crisis,[38] adopted a passive policy as far as benevolence in America was concerned. With the settlement of the "Lusitania" incident the Commission set about to strengthen its position in America by establishing on a permanent basis a country-wide organization comprised of state committees with subcommittees in counties and towns. As a result of this reorganization dormant or overlapping committees were replaced by a permanent, decentralized C.R.B. structure through which the entire public could be reached.

DOCUMENT NO. 574

Telegram, BATES TO HOOVER, *suggesting that since Allied Governments had subsidized the Commission the time had come to discontinue appeals for charity*

NEW YORK, 19 April 1915

Hoover
London

Having regard to statement on authority of Consul to publication yesterday of large orders by the Belgian Government, to Foundation decision,[39] and to vastness of food problem, believe time near or has come in behalf of all whose generosity has been invoked and which has enabled the situation to be bridged to put the future responsibility squarely up to all the warring nations. The question imminent is how far it is fair and proper to continue appeals in this and other neutral countries. The fall and winter conditions warranted and demanded world humanity; such may properly continue to be invoked only if, and as long as such conditions endure, but as these disappear or governments assume or become capable of carrying the burden, such appeals should cease through appreciative announcement ending them considerately and wisely in few weeks, say June 1st; but keeping what is a noble nation-wide organization intact as possible against the hour of future emergency to this country or another. The Commission's mechanism of course must continue to be the purchasing and forwarding and distributing medium.

BATES

[38] See chapter xii.

[39] The Rockefeller Foundation donations in the emergency of the first months were nearly $1,000,000 in relief supplies. As will be seen their generous co-operation with the Commission continued throughout the war, taking the form of large cash contributions to special public appeals of the Commission.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

November 4, 1915.

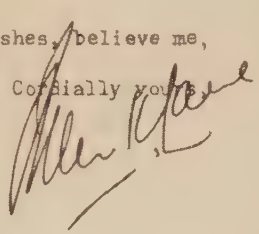
PERSONAL.

My dear Mr. Hoover:

I have noted the data respecting your work. Yesterday morning I had a talk with the President, and I found that everything was all serene so far as you are concerned, and that he is just as proud of you as the rest of us are.

With all good wishes, believe me,

Cordially yours,



Herbert Hoover, Esq.,
care Belgian Relief Commission,
New York, N. Y.

Letter, 4 November 1915, Franklin Lane to Hoover

DOCUMENT NO. 575

Telegram, HOOVER TO BATES, *agreeing to suspend appeals in America only temporarily and planning a vigorous campaign for charity in the autumn*

LONDON, 20 April 1915

Lindon Bates
New York

Many reasons why cannot abandon benevolent side. Must bear in mind governmental support only operates as matter of exchange and therefore does not provide for the destitute. We hope for sufficient benevolent support for the present from appeals to be made here next week also my feeling is present results America not commensurate with cost and effort of ourselves and friends and feel that if we simply suspend effort in America without any public announcement of any kind thus giving a period of quiescence in our demands it will allow recuperation and arm us most strongly for renewed vigorous campaign next autumn if situation unchanged. Obviously cannot close appeal way you suggest while appealing other countries. In any event destitute always with us.

HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 576

Letter, HOOVER TO A. J. HEMPHILL, *describing the methods of operation of the Commission's provisioning department, the misunderstanding of which in America had depressed the results of charitable appeals*

LONDON, 1 June 1915

A. J. Hemphill, Esq.
Commission for Relief in Belgium, New York

DEAR MR. HEMPHILL:

Many thanks for your letter of May 21st.

I quite sympathize with the feeling that our publicity may develop conflicting results.

The articles which you sent me did not originate from our publicity department here but apparently were compiled by one of the American press agencies in London, from a speech which I delivered at the Mansion House, together with some data from our fortnightly reports.

I entirely recognize the difficulty of deriving any simple explanation of the facts—first that we . . . make a profit upon our Provisioning Department. The fact, however, does remain that this method of organization has been the salvation of Belgium and that every concession which we can obtain on the purchase of foodstuffs which we resell increases our profits, and that these profits go direct to the support of the destitute, so that every atom of concession given us by transportation and other commercial bodies is a direct contribution by them to the support of the destitute, by virtue of increasing the

profit which we make on the sale of foodstuffs to those who can still pay. As great as the benevolence of the world has been, the people of Belgium would have starved before this had it not been for the success which we have had in rehabilitating the currency in Belgium, in effecting exchange on Belgium, and in the profits that we have made, which went over to the destitute end. The whole of this organization has been no less a measure of benevolence, and in fact of more intelligent charity than the actual support (itself) of the destitute.

I regret intensely that any misconstruction should have been put on the matter in America, and apparently nothing of the kind originated here, as is evidenced by the great support we have had from England and her Colonies as a result of these explanations. This support now amounts to a larger sum than that contributed from the whole of the United States, and this in addition to something over £1,600,000 found by the English people for Belgian Relief in other quarters. In other words we believe that, complicated as our system is, it is capable of intelligent representation and that a frank and open statement of the whole of our methods commands the most intelligent support. We have had no difficulty in obtaining concessions from shipping companies, shipping agents, and insurance and transport organizations in other quarters of the globe by virtue of the appeal which we made to them as business people that we were conducting an eminently charitable institution absolutely on sound financial lines.

Yours faithfully
(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman

DOCUMENT NO. 577

Letter, HOOVER TO BATES, *discussing the future policy of the Commission in America in connection with charity, recommending a decentralized organization, and limiting appeals to the care of the destitute*

LONDON, 31 August 1915

Lindon W. Bates, Esq.
New York

DEAR BATES:

I should like you to take up with White[40] the whole question of publicity and organization of the charitable side in America, as he knows our experience here and can keep before you our actual psychological changes in tenor at this end.

It appears to me, from the considerable experience which we have now had in all phases of this work, that certain features have developed. We initially appealed for foodstuffs for a starving nation, but we have since built up an economic machine by which this is no

[40] J. B. White and Millard Hunsiker, who had assisted Hoover in London from the beginning, made trips to America in the summer of 1915.

longer a legitimate undercurrent of appeal and we long since abandoned it everywhere except that these phases of the matter seem to crop up in the American mind. The only legitimate, honest appeal which we have the right to make to the public now is for food, money, or clothing for the *destitute* in Belgium. Any other basis of appeal is subject to refutation at once as dishonest, and must lead us into criticism. Furthermore, in the initial stages in order to bring vividly before the world the right of the Belgians to import foodstuffs, we engaged in a wide propaganda of newspaper publicity. This material had great news value and was freely used and in the main served to create a public opinion in support of the Commission's objects. This phase is now firmly established, and the material no longer has news value and is no longer received by the press. Practically, the era of publicity in the daily prodding of the newspaper is entirely over and is degenerating into personal puffs. It is a useless waste of money, time, and energy to pursue it, and lacks dignity apropos the position we have arrived at. Announcements of importance must be made from London. The political phases which surround the Commission are so delicate and only to be balanced by the London office. The Germans greatly resent direct publicity from us and it embarrasses our relations with them. It should be accomplished by committees locally.

Our experience of actual results in soliciting benevolence proves that beyond all question of doubt the only real fruitful method of securing what we want is through strong decentralized committee organization. The thing which produces money and material is the personal interest and solicitation of people of standing in each community. Practically our most successful field to date has been the Australasian Colonies where we have issued but one document and that was originally an appeal from the London office. The whole of the work has been done by closely knit and able local committees and has produced so far practically as much money out of the five millions of people as has been produced out of the whole ninety million in the United States. Likewise the organization in England of a special general committee with subcommittees in every locality has produced extraordinarily gratifying results with the use of scarcely any newspaper publicity, and even this has been accomplished in competition with a thousand other funds which are in the field. If we review the American position we shall find some interesting lessons to be had out of it. In the first place, the contributions to the Rockefeller Foundation and *Northwestern Miller* were inspired directly from the American Ambassador in London. The New York Belgian Relief Fund, of course, operated on its own initiative. After these we may select the States of California, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Ohio, Colorado, Illinois, and Iowa. In these cases the committees were organized on inspiration directly from the London office, and the results of these committees would have been practically the same without any daily newspaper dope. Their results were founded on the personal appeal of the gentlemen who organized them. If we eliminate all these items from the totals obtained in the United States, the whole amount degenerates down to only $1,000,000 which could be attributed to the vast amount of propaganda carried

on from all offices and a large part was due to the personal work of these committees which you set up, as distinguished from the publicity. In other words, the whole of this is to show that the effective result is obtained from capable decentralization and publicity must be obtained practically by supplying material to the committees only, at least from now on. When one comes to the question of committee organization we immediately come to the question of personal *amour propre*. In order to gain the best results, one has got to elevate the efforts of the individuals in these committees to as high a point as is possible in order to give them a stimulating interest which is absolutely necessary. My own idea would be, subject always to better considered opinion, to set up the chairmen of all state committees and have them co-operate with us in forming a national body in support of this Commission; that these gentlemen should be asked to elect from their members an executive body; that the Commission for Relief in Belgium should undertake to pay the whole of the out-of-pocket expenses of the central organization. I would have this Committee called something like "National Committee in Support of the Commission for Relief in Belgium"; its sole function to be to collect money and material and hand them on to us.

In the matter of a campaign this autumn, our necessities come practically to the fact that we should be able to take care of the destitute in Belgium out of other resources than those from the United States, except as to the one item, and that is clothing. It seems to me that it would attract the imagination of the American people better to have the job of clothing the destitute in Belgium and Northern France assigned them and to work on this theme; but, above all things, the American campaign has got to be gotten off the basis of "saving a famishing nation" and gotten on to the support of the destitute.

Of all the people we have got engaged on this organization work in many countries, far and away the most successful man has been Goode, and I think it is well to consider whether we should not send him to America to help with this new campaign on the above lines. As you know, he is half an American.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman

5. *Warm Clothing for the Belgians. September 1915–April 1916*

In the autumn of 1915 it was possible for the Commission to renew its appeal for aid to the destitute of the occupied regions. The tension in American and German relations had relaxed, and there was no likelihood of changes in the military situation which would seriously affect the relief problem. Government subsidies provided in general for the

current food needs, but there were no funds available to furnish clothing needed by thousands of Belgians and French as the winter approached. The solicitation of gift clothing was the task set for the reorganized C.R.B. committees in the United States.

In preparation for this renewed activity Hoover returned to America and discussed Belgian relief with the Washington authorities.[41] As a result of these discussions the President publicly stated his confidence in the C.R.B. and his approval of its work. Further, at Hoover's suggestion, President Wilson asked a number of men of affairs to join the committee representing the Commission in the United States. The Presidential support and this appointment of what was known as the New York Committee greatly strengthened the Commission's position in America.

The first action of the newly constituted New York Committee of the Commission was to appeal throughout America for clothing, shoes, and blankets for Belgium. The appeal, based upon Hoover's vivid story[42] of the necessities, was launched in November 1915. Not only were the activities of the state and subcommittees revived but numerous independent committees sprang into being for this campaign. The call was for gifts of clothing primarily but the response was generous in cash donations[43] with which the Commission purchased large quantities of materials. The Rockefeller Foundation, which had played such an important part in the first months of the relief work, appropriated $200,000[44] to the Commission for clothing purchases. The success of this appeal indicated very clearly that the Commission's country-wide organization not only could be depended upon to furnish continuous support but would respond to emergency calls with enthusiasm.

The appeal for clothing ended with the spring of 1916 and the coming of warm weather, but two special efforts in the spring of 1916 resulted in generous support to the increasing

[41] This trip to America was the only occasion during the first year of the Commission's life when Hoover was not engaged in negotiations of one sort or another which vitally affected the continuance of relief and which necessitated his presence in London, Belgium, or Berlin.

[42] Document 581.

[43] Over $700,000 in cash was received by the Commission before January 1915. Individual donations ranging from $100 to $5,000 were numerous and there were two donations of $10,000 each, both from women.

[44] See Document 582.

number of destitute under the care of the Commission. The first of these activities was the Daughters of the American Revolution "Flag Day" collection held on King Albert's birthday. In conjunction with this the New York Committee made a direct appeal to a large number of individuals, with gratifying results. The second effort was the "Allied Bazaar" which took place in June 1916, in which the Commission was one of the participating organizations. In the same month the Commission entered into an arrangement with the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America whereby the Commission's appeal was included in the Council's War Relief appeal. This successful co-operation continued until America entered the war.

DOCUMENT NO. 578

Telegram, Hoover to C.R.B., New York, *pointing out the necessity for clothing during the coming winter and proposing that a national campaign for used clothing be organized in America*

London, 7 September 1915

Relief Commission, New York

The necessity for extremely large quantity of substantial second-hand clothing and new material for remaking it, including boots, has become most imperative throughout Northern France as well as Belgium. In a general way we can see resource for food supply for a few months ahead, but we have no resources which we can apply to clothing and there are some five million people who must be clothed during the winter, of which eighty per cent are women and children. Would like your advice looking toward organizing national campaign for this purpose, it being assigned as Americans' main job for this year. I would suggest that the chairman or most active men of each of our State Committees should be asked to join Commission as members of the Advisory Committee . . . and it may be that a few cables from here direct to State Committees would give a useful punch to their exertions. We do not want rubbish, and all material should be sorted and baled before shipment. Want substantial and clean stuff capable of being remade. Should like to have your local committees employ their cash funds in buying new materials such as would be normally required to remake these second-hand garments in our workshops. All such gifts will be transported into Belgium entirely free of cost to donors. I believe you would find it highly advantageous if Goode came over as sort of organizing secretary to relieve you of detail work of this campaign. Kindly let me have your views.

Hoover

DOCUMENT NO. 579

Statement[45] *issued from the White House regarding the work of the Commission*

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON
3 November 1915

The President and Secretary of State this morning had brief interviews with Mr. Hoover, the Chairman of the Belgian Relief Commission, and it was learned in connection with his visit that the Administration is highly pleased with the way in which the work of the Commission has been done, and with the results accomplished. It has not only kept millions of Belgians alive but has carried its work on to the entire satisfaction of all the belligerent governments concerned and with their approval and co-operation. It has not only not been the source of international complications but has, on the contrary, been a source of international good will and disinterested service and has won the confidence of everyone with whom it has had occasion to deal.

DOCUMENT NO. 580

Letter, PRESIDENT WILSON TO HOOVER, *enclosing letters to men whom Hoover had suggested for the Presidential Committee of the Commission in America*

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON
3 November 1915

Mr. Herbert Hoover
The New Willard, Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. HOOVER:

I am taking great pleasure in sending you the enclosed letters for the several gentlemen about whom you spoke today, and take this occasion again to bid you Godspeed in the splendid work you are doing.

Cordially and sincerely yours
(Signed) WOODROW WILSON

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON
3 November 1915

Mr. Herbert S. Eldridge
c/o Mr. Herbert C. Hoover
Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. ELDRIDGE:

Mr. Hoover, the Chairman of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, has approached me with regard to difficulties which have arisen in the conduct of that great humanitarian work, in which he

[45] This was typed by the President himself. See Joseph P. Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson as I Knew Him*, p. 76; also letter itself reproduced in *New York Times* version of Tumulty's book, 16th November 1921, as one of President Wilson's rare efforts at publicity.

feels he needs the support of an enlarged committee of gentlemen of large experience to co-operate with him in settling and conducting the administration of the branch of the Commission in the United States.

I am so much impressed with the importance of this institution, on which the lives of so many people are dependent, that I venture to say to you that I would personally be very much gratified if you could see your way to join such a Committee.

The other gentlemen with whom I am communicating in this particular are Messrs. Alexander Hemphill, Otto T. Bannard, S. R. Bertron, Oscar Straus, Melville E. Stone, and John Beaver White. Of course, you may wish to add others to your number, either from the officers of the Commission or otherwise.[46]

Cordially and sincerely yours

(Signed) WOODROW WILSON

DOCUMENT NO. 581

Letter, HOOVER TO THE NEW YORK COMMITTEE OF THE COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM, *recommending that the Commission ask the American people to clothe the destitute in Belgium and Northern France during the coming winter*

NEW YORK, 6 November 1915

The New York Committee of the
Commission for Relief in Belgium
New York

DEAR SIRS:

CLOTHING NECESSITIES IN BELGIUM AND NORTHERN FRANCE

It appears to me that it is necessary for us to go frankly to the American people and ask them to clothe the destitute in the occupied areas of Belgium and Northern France during the coming winter.

There are nine million people in these areas and of these over one-third are now either wholly or partially destitute and are today receiving their food either wholly or partially without payment.

[46] Several of those invited by President Wilson to serve on the Presidential Committee found it impossible to comply and others were added, so that the committee when completed consisted of: Alexander J. Hemphill, John Beaver White, S. Reading Bertron, C. A. Coffin, R. Fulton Cutting, Elbert H. Gary, Henry L. Stimson, Oscar S. Straus, Frank Trumbull, Frank A. Vanderlip, Herbert S. Eldridge. Mr. Pierre Mali, Belgian Consul-General in New York, was invited to be present at all meetings. The Presidential Committee gave active assistance to the benevolent work of the C.R.B., and with but few exceptions its personnel remained as at first constituted. Mr. Herbert S. Eldridge died in December 1915, very soon after being named a member; in August 1916 Mr. W. L. Honnold and Captain J. F. Lucey were elected to membership; and in August 1918 Mr. Julius H. Barnes and Mr. E. G. Broenniman were added.

As you know we have set up economic measures based on the ability of a portion of the population to pay for its food, which, with the contributions of other countries, enable us for the present to find the bare minimum of food supplies for the whole nine million people, but we have no reserves with which to provide clothing for the destitute. We now plead for help on their behalf.

Even if these nine million people had money they could not import clothes, or the raw materials with which to manufacture them, through the blockade into an area under military occupation. While the better classes have some clothing with which they can get along, the destitute are composed of the working classes which naturally had little reserves of clothing when the war broke out. The only additions they have received since then have been the generous contributions from America, Canada, and elsewhere. By Christmas time all the clothing which we have in our various establishments will be exhausted.

It is a certainty that the undue exposure of underclad men, women, and children to the bitter winter will greatly increase mortality. The clothing for these people can be provided only if we receive gift supplies for the purpose. We must depend upon the American people.

We have arranged that the cost of transportation of clothes from any central point in the United States to Belgium and Northern France and of the distribution will be paid for out of funds which have been especially provided so that the whole American contributions will reach the destitute without one cent of deduction.

In the matter of the character of clothing for these people, we are surrounded with a multitude of difficulties. In the first instance the drastic sanitary arrangements made by the governments through whose territory we must pass make the introduction of second-hand clothing, especially in the areas of the operating armies where the want will be greatest, practically impossible.

We therefore must ask frankly for new clothing and more particularly for unmade material. Not that the destitute in Belgium and Northern France are not intensely grateful for second-hand clothing, but as a matter of necessity, we are forced to ask only for unworn stuffs.

It must be borne in mind that those for whom we appeal are living under almost total industrial paralysis; that many millions of them are idle, and that the cry we have from them daily is, "Give us something to do, give us something to work on so that we may contribute to our own support." Therefore if we can provide them with materials they will make up their own clothing. Furthermore the poor of Belgium and Northern France can devise an extraordinary amount of clothing out of a given piece of cloth and can work in such materials to patch up their own clothing. For this reason we are anxious to secure piece goods as far as possible, or alternatively, unworn made-up clothing.

We have established workrooms in all the leading Belgian cities. The one in Brussels alone gives employment to over 15,000 people. This clothing is all distributed free through our local communal committees after they have made a careful investigation of the necessities of each recipient. There are today between thirty and forty

thousand of the noblest and best Belgian and French people giving their whole services in the volunteer conduct of these local committees, endeavoring with the greatest possible devotion and under the greatest strain, to eke out to their utmost usefulness the meager supplies which we are able to furnish.

What we urgently need is woolen clothes for women and girls and boys, woolen and cotton materials for babies' clothing, shawls, stockings, jerseys, sweaters, blankets, boots and shoes, underclothing, overcoats, petticoats, suits of all descriptions, and in fact every article in the gamut of warm clothing.

It seems to us that there must be on the shelves of the stores and in the houses of the United States a large amount of remnant cloth materials and new ready-made clothing which would be contributed or could be purchased by the various committees interested in our work on terms of the greatest possible economy.

It seems to me that with the generosity of the American merchant and manufacturer our local committees from monies that may be subscribed to them for this purpose can purchase such materials at far more advantageous rates than can be obtained in any commercial transaction.

It is our hope that we may have large consignments arriving by Christmas and we do not believe that there is any manner in which the American people can better show their inherent instinct of philanthropy and kindliness than by answering this appeal from millions of helpless, destitute people.

Yours faithfully

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 582

Letter, ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION TO THE COMMISSION, *donating $200,000 for the purchase of clothing*

NEW YORK, 6 December 1915

Commission for Relief in Belgium
New York

GENTLEMEN:

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Rockefeller Foundation held on December 3, it was unanimously voted to appropriate $200,000 to your Commission "for the purchase of material for clothing, the same to be imported by the Commission into Belgium and there manufactured by Belgian labor." I take pleasure in handing you herewith the check of the Rockefeller Foundation for Two hundred thousand dollars ($200,000) for expenditure under the conditions named.

In transmitting this contribution, I take the liberty of saying that your present appeal to the American public would, in my opinion, be strengthened if the basis on which the money needed for clothing was calculated to be $4,000,000. That figure may well be a conservative one in view of the enormous scale of relief operations in Bel-

gium, but I think a circumstantial exhibit of the needs reported from the different sections, and examples showing how you arrived at the total estimate, would impress the public favorably and increase their response.

Very truly yours

(Signed) JEROME D. GREENE

DOCUMENT NO. 583

Telegram, QUEEN ELISABETH TO DAUGHTERS OF AMERICAN REVOLUTION, *expressing appreciation of the proposed plan of commemorating King Albert's birthday in America by the collection of donations for the destitute of Belgium*

[LA PANNE, BELGIUM]
30 March 1916

To the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution

Mrs. William Cumming Story, President-General
New York

I am delighted with your idea of commemorating April eighth throughout the United States. Nothing could touch me more than to see the King's, my Husband's, birthday celebrated by a manifestation of charity through the distribution of ten million Belgian flags in return for an offering for the destitute in Belgium. I express my grateful appreciation to the Daughters of the American Revolution for this attention, which shows once more the generous and delicate feelings of American women.

To all who will wear the Belgian flags on April eighth and ninth I send, in the name of the Belgian mothers, my heartfelt thanks.

(Signed) ELISABETH

6. *The Commission's Appeal for Belgian Children. 1916–1917*

Month by month in 1916 the Commission found it increasingly difficult to meet the requirements of the people in the occupied territory. The production of supplies of all sorts had diminished and the consequent necessity of broadening the program of importations, coupled with the phenomenal increase in food and transportation costs, was more than the Commission's income from all sources could bear. From time to time Hoover had succeeded in securing increased government subsidies,[47] but the Commission was rarely free from financial worries, and for this reason and because of shipping problems[48] imports fell short of the theoretical pro-

[47] Chapter iv.
[48] Chapter v.

gram. The fact remains that the people did not starve but the insufficiency made itself felt in a gradually increasing death rate and a greater prevalence of the diseases of undernutrition particularly among children. Investigation of this situation conducted in the spring and summer of 1916[49] led the Commission again to appeal for public support in order to provide supplementary rations for the children. Throughout 1916–1917 children's relief formed the basis of the Commission's appeal.

One of the most valuable aids in this campaign was a letter supporting the Commission's appeal sent by Pope Benedict XV to Cardinal Gibbons asking the co-operation of the bishops and clergy of the Catholic Church in America.[50]

DOCUMENT NO. 584

Letter, Pope Benedict XV to Cardinal Gibbons, *approving the Commission's appeal for Belgian children*

The Vatican, 28 October 1916

To His Eminence
James Cardinal Gibbons
Archbishop of Baltimore

My Lord Cardinal:

Profound compassion of a father has again moved Our heart, when We read an important letter recently sent to Us by the distinguished Chairman of the praiseworthy "Commission for Relief in Belgium," describing in few words, yet showing proof of most terrible reality, the pitiable situation of numerous Belgian children who, during two sad years, have been suffering from the lack of that proper nourishment necessary to sustain the tender existence of budding childhood.

In most moving terms the Chairman has described how so many desolate families, after having given everything humanly possible to give, now find themselves with nothing left with which to appease the hunger of their little ones.

[49] Dr. William Palmer Lucas, appointed by the C.R.B. to investigate, made his report after three months' stay in Belgium in the summer of 1916.

[50] As far back as November 1914 Hoover had thought of securing the support of the Vatican. He had sounded out the matter through Signor Gelasio Caetani, active in the Italian committee for Belgian relief. At that time the Vatican was very favorably disposed to the work but feared that any special public expression of appreciation might be construed as a political opinion. In 1916 George Barr Baker of the Commission's New York office, through the medium of Signor Cortesi, was granted an audience with Benedict XV, when he presented Hoover's plea for the children of Belgium and received the assurances of the Vatican's support.

He has made Us see, almost as if they were passing before these very eyes, dimmed with tears, the long file, continuously increasing, of Belgian infants waiting for their daily distribution of bread; unhappy little ones whose bodies, emaciated by lack of proper nutrition, bear not infrequently the impress of some deadly sickness brought about by their failure to receive the food which children of their age require.

In his letter the Chairman has told Us how, in order to ward off so much illness, his Commission, displaying the very best of good will and stopping at no sacrifice, has arranged for the distribution to the children of a daily supplementary meal. He sorrowfully adds, however, that unhappily owing to insufficient means, the Commission has found itself unable to prepare and supply such extra food to all the babies who have need of it.

In this emergency the most worthy Chairman has turned his thought and his heart to the millions of children of your happy, noble America, who, in the abundance with which they are now surrounded, could they be given an exact idea of the pitiable and unfortunate condition of their little fellow-creatures in Belgium—more especially if an appealing and encouraging word might reach them from Us—would not hesitate a moment to co-operate heartily, in accordance with some prearranged plan, to come promptly to the relief of these needy Belgian babies.

In view of this condition of affairs, We have considered the work indicated so humanitarian and so holy that, in prompt compliance with the appeal addressed to Us by those who are directing the work of the Commission, We have decided to approve and recommend it, as We hereby do endorse it most heartily by these words to you, My Lord Cardinal, and through you, to the illustrious members of the American Episcopate, to the Clergy, and to every generous heart; but particularly to those children of America upon whom is based every hope of success for the plan devised by this beneficent institution.

Neither do We doubt, in truth, but that the happy children of America, without distinction of faith or of class, at this approach of another winter which it is announced will be even more severe and painful than the two preceding years, will vie, in their innocent pride, with each other to be able to extend to their little brothers and sisters of the Belgian nation, even though across the immense ocean, the helping hand and the offerings of that charity which knows no distance.

The words of our Divine Redeemer: "As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me" (Matthew xxv: 40), so appropriately brought to mind in these circumstances, are a sure pledge of heavenly pleasure and reward; while We feel likewise, how greatly, in this period of atrocious fratricidal carnage, even in the eyes of the world, are ennobled the people of more fortunate lands by the performance of true and loving deeds and by the pouring of a little balm upon the wounds of those less fortunate.

In the full faith that Your Eminence, efficaciously aided by all, according to their means and strength, will do as much as may be in your power to favor this initiative, in proof of the loving interest which We have for its successful outcome, We send to you enclosed

Our contribution of Ten Thousand Lire, which gift, if it be inadequate to the needs of the occasion and appears slight in itself, is not, however, such, when one considers the condition of this Apostolic See in the present unhappy moment.

At the same time, while being particularly happy to represent upon this earth that Jesus who was the Divine Friend of little children, We invoke from Our heart upon all those who shall second and aid this noble and delicate undertaking an abundance of blessings and heavenly rewards, of which is a pledge the Apostolic Benediction, which, with very special affection, We impart to you, My Lord Cardinal, to your two Colleagues in the Sacred College, to the Bishops, Clergy, and to all the Faithful of the United States.

(Signed) BENEDICTUS P. P. XV

[*Translation*]

DOCUMENT NO. 585

Letter, CARDINAL GIBBONS TO THE CATHOLIC CLERGY IN THE UNITED STATES, *enclosing the Pope's letter and offering to forward the proceeds of collections to the Commission*

CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE, BALTIMORE
4 December 1916

RIGHT REVEREND AND DEAR BISHOP:

I am sending you, herewith enclosed, a translation of an autograph letter addressed to me by His Holiness the Pope, through which He makes a most earnest appeal for the little suffering children of Belgium.

The Holy Father has written this letter at the solicitation of Mr. Herbert C. Hoover, Chairman of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, which is the only regular channel by which relief can enter Belgium, and which enjoys the full confidence of His Holiness.

I have no doubt that the extraordinary and touching appeal of His Holiness will be honored by generous contributions, which will cheer His paternal heart and bring seasonable joy and comfort to the little sufferers of Belgium.

Arrangements have been made by which the money collected or its value in food will be distributed by the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

If I may presume to make a suggestion, I respectfully propose that the most efficient and prompt way to relieve the afflicted little ones would be obtained by a general collection in your jurisdiction or by any other means your prudence would suggest.

I will be most happy to forward to the proper authorities the offerings of your Diocese sent to me, and later on, to have published a list of such donations.

With sentiments of the highest esteem, I am

Faithfully Yours in Xto.,

(Signed) J. CARD. GIBBONS
Archbishop of Baltimore

An extremely effective method of appeal for children was the communal support plan, whereby the Commission asked communities, committees, and individuals in America to assume responsibility for children's aid in specific communes in Belgium. This campaign, which was greatly aided by an interesting map prepared and circulated by the Commission, was first started in New York[51] and vicinity, but other sections of the country[52] soon "adopted" the children of areas in Belgium.

Early in 1917 Mr. R. J. Cuddihy started the second *Literary Digest* campaign for Belgian relief on behalf, in this instance, of the children of Belgium. The appeal was carried in each number of the *Literary Digest* for several months, and as a result, newspapers opened their columns for subscriptions and various committees were formed all over the United States. The total of over $500,000 of direct receipts does not represent the full services of the *Literary Digest* in this second appeal, for that publication conducted an energetic campaign of national publicity which was of great value to all the C.R.B. committees in every state.

Two institutions with which Hoover was personally connected employed interesting methods of increasing their donations. The American Institute of Mining Engineers organized a campaign to sell shares in "Belgian Kiddies, Ltd."[53] The entire amount of "preferred stock" $120,000 was soon pledged. Under the leadership of John Hays Hammond and W. B. Thompson, the Rocky Mountain Club, composed largely of mining engineers, set up the "Rocky Mountain Club–Hoover Fund for Belgian Relief" and in view of the need in Belgium deferred the erection of a clubhouse for which plans were well advanced. At a complimentary dinner to Hoover on the 20th January 1917 the Fund was opened with an anonymous $100,000 donation. Former President

[51] To Mrs. A. H. Scribner of New York and Mrs. Bayard Henry of Philadelphia is due credit for the enthusiasm with which the idea spread in their localities.

[52] A newly formed C.R.B. committee in Greater New York, organized with the assistance of Miss Florence Wardwell, pledged itself for the support of 500,000 children of the provinces of Liège, Limbourg, Luxembourg, and Namur; a Belgian Children's Relief Committee of Pennsylvania adopted Antwerp Province; the New England Belgian Relief Fund undertook to supply an extra daily meal to 20,000 children of Louvain; similar committees in Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio adopted other Belgian communes.

[53] Document 586.

Roosevelt acted as Honorary Chairman of the Fund and his characteristic letter to the club members and to men and women of the West[54] was given wide publicity. The New York Chamber of Commerce carried out among its membership a successful campaign which was launched with an address and an appeal made by Hoover on the 1st February 1917.

The "Dollar Christmas Fund"[55] entered wholeheartedly into this 1916 campaign as it did on every other occasion when the Commission asked its help. This was of the nature of a special fund which the Commission applied according to the wishes of the committee. Of like character was the "Forbes Fund"[56] begun in 1916 and continued to the end of relief work and applied by the Commission to the relief of special cases of distress not accessible through general donations.

In the latter part of 1916 and the beginning of 1917, a number of Allied Bazaars were held in Chicago, Boston, and Baltimore patterned after the New York Bazaar held earlier in the year. The Commission's head office and local committees co-operated and received a proportion of the proceeds. At this time, in addition to these special events and to the continued efforts of the country-wide C.R.B. organization, the Commission was recipient of large individual donations. Early in 1917 an anonymous doner gave $60,000. There were many donations of $5,000 and $10,000. Edward S. Harkness gave $100,000 in his own name and $200,000 in his mother's name, adding later $20,000 in both names.

During the same period the appeals of the National Committee for Relief in Belgium to the British Empire had objectives similar to those in the United States. In 1916 the

[54] Document 587. It is interesting to record that the returns, which were generous, came from everywhere, but a large proportion were gifts of mine workers from Alaska to Chile.

[55] This Committee, one of the first formed in the United States to help the Belgians and also among the last to disband, was composed largely of publishers. Its contributions were: 1914, over $43,000; 1915, $55,000 for the purchase of shoes; 1916, nearly $100,000 for Belgian children; and in 1917 and 1918–19 again, its collections approaching $100,000 for these years were applied to special relief through the Commission's "Brussels Office Relief Fund." Percy S. Bullen was active in the Committee's formation and throughout its five years of life, and Henry Clews was treasurer.

[56] Established in March 1916 as the result of an offer by W. Cameron Forbes of Boston of $5,000 to Hoover, and continued until 1919 by added contributions from the Forbes family.

call was for funds to enable the Commission to supply a supplementary meal for school children, and the public responded most generously. During the life of the National Committee an average of almost $500,000 each month was turned over to the Commission for the care of the destitute, and contributions came "from collections of loyal and willing helpers from parts of the Empire so far separated as Birmingham and Auckland, the Seychelles and British Honduras, Wei-hai-wei and Montreal."[57]

DOCUMENT NO. 586

Extract from Prospectus of Belgian Kiddies, Ltd.

[New York, 9 December 1916]

I. The object of this stock issue is to provide one meal per day for ten thousand Belgian children for the year 1917. Each share sold means 365 square meals for one child.

II. Our business is constantly growing and no estimate can be made of the requirements of 1918.

III. Security of the principal is absolutely assured by the personal management of H. C. Hoover and associates.

IV. That no cash dividends will ever be paid is absolutely guaranteed.

V. The stock is probably only part paid and is fully assessable.

VI. The stock is preferred as to holders, the subscribers being preferably taken from the members of the mining and metallurgical professions, and their wives and sisters.

VII. The demand value of the shares shall be $12, preferably payable in advance, but installments will be welcome if more convenient to the subscriber.

The legality of this issue has been passed upon by no one, but the committee can convince anyone of its necessity.

DOCUMENT NO. 587

Letter, Theodore Roosevelt to Members of the Rocky Mountain Club and Men and Women of the West, *appealing for the children of Belgium*

Oyster Bay, New York
12 March 1917

My Fellow-Members of the Rocky Mountain Club
and Men and Women of the West:

The action of the Rocky Mountain Club in devoting its energies to the relief of the suffering children of Belgium rang true to the Western spirit, as all of us who have lived in the mountains and the plains have come to know that spirit. I have gladly joined in the movement

[57] Sir William Goode, K.B.E., *The National Committee for Relief in Belgium,* p. 1.

to do what I can for a gallant little nation which has been cruelly trampled under foot, for no fault of its own, and now lies prostrate, threatened with the loss of its spiritual as well as its physical being. It is the literal truth that rarely since the days of Herod has child life been so menaced as today in Belgium.

I shall not deal with the material side of this question, or tell how 1,250,000 children are compelled to go hungry, and are threatened with disease and slow starvation. All this is being told in the West in speeches, in letters, in literature, in cartoons and in personal pleas. Suffice it to say that Belgium today stands in mortal danger of losing both its bodily life and its soul.

But what of us? What of our soul if like the Levite and the Priest we pass on our business with averted eyes? The nation that turns a deaf ear to the sufferings of ten million people, including a million and a quarter children, is committing moral suicide. Diseases born of want and hunger are spreading with dreadful rapidity among these 1,250,000 children of Belgium. Shall we look idly on while these children die? Other nations do not sit idle. War-torn England and France have given largely. Brave little Holland has cared within her own borders for hundreds of thousands of refugees. The rest of the world has spent $250,000,000 for Belgium. We have contributed only nine millions. Is this enough to make us think that we have done our duty? We say with unctuous self-satisfaction that we have been "kept out of war." We chuckle because in 1916 we sold five billions' worth of products to Europe. Are our souls rotted? Can we see only the dollar sign in the sky? What of our souls if we continue deaf to the crying need of a gallant nation, threatened with extinction through the loss of its first born? Can any man of high and generous nature, having been told the facts, continue to be indifferent?

The West has done much, but it has not done enough. I appeal to the men of the West to follow the Rocky Mountain Club. I appeal to the women of the West to take the thought of wrecked and tormented Belgium to their hearts.

I should like to see every school house in the West a collection agency for the Rocky Mountain Club–Hoover Fund.

I should like to see every Sunday School interested.

I should like to know that every pulpit in the West was ringing with the story.

I should like to see in every city and village a central agency collecting and forwarding relief to Mr. William B. Thompson, the treasurer of the fund, No. 65 West 44th Street.

I should like to see every cattle range a Rocky Mountain Club Fund.

I should like to know that every mining superintendent had addressed his men telling them the story and asking them to contribute each pay day a regular sum, following the example of the miners in South Africa, who are giving ten per cent of their wages.

I should like to see every newspaper open its columns to the cause.

I should like to see every social gathering wind up with a Belgian collection.

I should like to see the West on fire over Belgium's wrongs and Belgium's needs.

I cannot say more. I should be ashamed to say less.

(Signed) THEODORE ROOSEVELT

DOCUMENT NO. 588

Letter, ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION TO THE COMMISSION, *donating the sum of $100,000 toward providing an extra ration for Belgian children*

NEW YORK, 4 April 1917

Mr. W. L. Honnold
Director in America of the
Commission for Relief in Belgium
New York City

MY DEAR MR. HONNOLD:

The Executive Committee of the Rockefeller Foundation appropriated yesterday the sum of $100,000 to be made immediately available for the work of the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

The Foundation has complete confidence in the efficiency of the work which you are doing and is impressed with its vital importance. To provide an extra ration for Belgian children is so important a work that it cannot fail to appeal to the American public.

While our committee took no formal action yesterday, it was understood that from month to month you will report your success in securing funds and that in the light of the results which are obtained, the Foundation will consider additional contributions to the Commission.

At a time when so few agencies can guarantee the distribution of aid to war sufferers, the American public will undoubtedly appreciate the opportunity which your organization offers for the expression of sympathy and the giving of assistance.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) GEORGE E. VINCENT

7. *Clothing and Special Charities. 1917–1918*

Hoover's presence in America in the early months of 1917 added as has been shown, a considerable impetus to the campaign for children's relief. The primary object of his trip, however, was to complete the details of a proposed relief loan to the Commission to be floated in America, the preliminaries having been already arranged with bankers in New York by cable from London.[58] Before the project could be put into effect the German declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare blocked temporarily the move-

[58] Chapter iv, Documents 155 to 162.

ment of the Commission's ships and put a complete stop to all endeavors except the major one of securing a "safe lane for relief cargoes."[59] Since relief supplies could not be moved, Allied subsidies to the Commission, though inadequate to finance the Commission's theoretical program of imports, were more than sufficient to fill the ships which were then available. By the time relief vessels began to move again, important events had occurred directly affecting the Commission.

On the 3d February the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Germany, and on the 6th April declared war. As has been described elsewhere[60] the end of American neutrality did not, as had been anticipated, necessitate a withdrawal of Americans from further participation in the direction of Belgian relief. Outside of occupied regions the Commission's organization remained much the same, but there were important changes in financing relief. America became the source of Allied finance and in the large credits established in favor of the Powers at war with Germany specific provision was made for Belgian and French relief. Each month the Commission received from the United States Treasury $7,500,000 for Belgian and $5,000,000 for French relief. The assumption by the Government of the financial responsibility, which, as Hoover pointed out in his letter of 14th May 1917[61] to his associates, was in no inconsiderable measure due to the campaigns conducted in behalf of the Belgian and French people, made it no longer necessary to appeal for general public support. The majority of collecting committees in America settled their accounts and disbanded after Hoover's announcement in May 1917. A few committees,[62] however, remained inactive for a short time and then resumed their work in the interest of special charities in Belgium.

During the last year of the war the only appeals by the

[59] Chapter v, Documents 227 to 242.

[60] Chapter xii.

[61] Document 589.

[62] Some of the groups which interested themselves in special phases of Belgian relief until the end of the war were the California Committee, the New England Committee, the Pennsylvania Committee of Women, the Philippine Islands Children's Fund, the Dollar Christmas Fund, Relief Work for Victims of the War (Canadian), the Spokane Committee, the Tennessee Committee, the Nevada Committee, the Washington State Committee, the Cleveland Fund, the Westchester County Committee, etc.

Commission were for used clothing.[63] Two country-wide drives in which the American Red Cross loaned its organization took place, the first during the week of the 18th to 25th March and the second on the 23rd to 30th September 1918. Red Cross chapters everywhere took up the work of collecting, working with the C.R.B. committees where they still existed. Clothing poured into the C.R.B. warehouses where it was unpacked, sorted, and baled for shipment. This campaign in America was accompanied by a similar activity in the United Kingdom under the auspices of the National Committee for Relief in Belgium, whose organization was revived for this purpose. The appeal was for clothing only, but as usual there were large contributions in cash for the purchase of new cloth and shoes. The results of these clothing appeals were beyond expectations. Of gift clothing alone in 1918 the Commission shipped 2,300 tons and in the first few months after the Armistice an additional 7,600 tons.[64]

Except for used clothing and special funds the Commission's appeals for gifts described in this chapter were for the relief of destitution in occupied Belgium only. The Commission shouldered the responsibility of provisioning the people in invaded Northern France[65] five months after the Belgian relief had started, and when it was assured of sufficient government funds to supply each individual regardless of his means with food. Government subsidies, however, were insufficient to meet the increasing demand for warm clothing, and as the years passed the Commission found that the requirements of special relief in the devastated areas, primarily among the children, demanded at-

[63] As a forerunner of the clothing campaign in the following year the Commission in the summer and fall of 1917 secured considerable discarded clothing from the cantonments. In this the Commission had the co-operation of the Secretary of War and these gifts of the newly drafted men were packed and sent to Belgium.

[64] It was impossible to count the items which went to make up the contents of these 9,100 tons of bales of gift clothing, but the following tabulation is the Commission's careful estimate:

Blankets and quilts	17,500
New garments	880,000
Second-hand garments	21,630,000
Shoes (pairs)	1,159,000
Socks and stockings (pairs)	279,000

[65] See chapter vi. For a description of the method of relief administration in Northern France see Appendix I.

tention. The people of Northern France participated in the distribution of used clothing secured by the various appeals, and in the last years of the war at Hoover's suggestion generous donors made it possible for the Commission to provide extra meals for French children and to establish child clinics.

DOCUMENT NO. 589

Letter, HOOVER TO HIS ASSOCIATES OF THE COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM, *stating that the relief work had now become a responsibility of the whole American nation through subsidies from the American Government, and advising that thereafter no appeals for contributions for general relief would be made*

NEW YORK, 14 May 1917

TO MY ASSOCIATES OF THE COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM:

We are sure that the whole American people will be glad to know that through the sympathetic arrangements made by the President and the Secretary of Treasury, the cost of the Belgian and Northern France relief, so far as it is feasible under present shipping conditions, will be borne for the next six months by the American Government. This has been made possible by a loan of $75,000,000 from the United States to the Governments of Belgium and France. The money will be advanced by the Treasury in installments of $12,500,000 per month, of which $7,500,000 will be available for Belgian relief and $5,000,000 for the relief in Northern France. The way is open so that at the termination of the six months thus provided for, application may be made to the Government for further loans. We desire to state that although the Commission has endeavored for many months to secure this gratifying result, we feel that the appeals that have been made by you have largely influenced the Government in finally granting the request of the Belgian and French Governments. Therefore the time, energy, and money expended in your campaign have done more than to bring in immediate contributions; they have helped to insure the relief of Belgium and Northern France throughout the war.

The Commission has long desired Government recognition in order that its work should be more firmly established as a distinctly American undertaking, and we feel that you will join with us in intense satisfaction that the work has now become a responsibility and a duty shared by the whole American nation.

Realizing that each committee and community has adopted its own method of making appeals and collecting funds, we do not purpose suggesting the specific action which you will take in meeting the changed conditions resulting from this gratifying action of our Government, but we outline below, in a few paragraphs, answers to certain general questions that may arise.

1. It will be noted that $12,500,000 per month is much less than the amount which we have stated as necessary to supply the imports required for the limited ration we have endeavored to provide. The explanation lies in that this amount will now cover all of the food-

stuffs that we can hope to ship owing to the recent swiftly developed shortage of the world's shipping. Our statements in regard to the amount necessary have been correct and the balance between the $12,500,000 and the former estimate required to give the limited ration will now of necessity be supplied by encroaching upon the country's stock of milk cattle which had been reserved to maintain a supply of fresh milk for the children and to serve as a nucleus from which to restock the country after the war. The importation of meat, particularly fats, has always been one of the most expensive items in our program.

2. *It must be clearly understood that the Commission for Relief in Belgium will continue to assume the entire charge of purchasing and transporting all food into Belgium and Northern France. The Commission also will continue to be the only fully regularized vehicle by which money, food, and clothing can be sent into Belgium.*

3. The Commercial Exchange Department will continue as heretofore to effect transfers of money into Belgium. By depositing dollars in our New York office or pounds sterling in London, the equivalent in francs will be paid to any person in Belgium provided the name and correct address be supplied. This service extends over practically all of Belgium except for a small restricted portion under military control. Individuals or Committees outside of Belgium can send money to relatives or friends, or support by direct money contributions any of the specially deserving internal charities which use local currency to advantage in payment of wages or in purchasing home-grown products. Over $5,000,000 has been transferred in this way since the belligerent governments gave their official sanction to the operations of this department.

4. The Government payments will commence on June 1st; and we shall be glad to have remittances up to that date, but we make no appeal for contributions thereafter.

5. We suggest that you offer to cancel all pledges made to you for future payments and offer to return any moneys which have been paid in advance on account of maturing pledges.

6. The children of Belgium will have the first call upon all food which is imported, and every effort will be made to maintain the supplementary meal which has been so important a factor up to the present in sustaining the health of millions of children.

7. Naturally, having built up such an effective organization you will desire to keep it alive as far as possible, and we venture to suggest that, although the general relief of the countries involved will now be met by the Government appropriations, emergencies and special conditions may arise which could only be met by private donations. In such circumstances your organization will afford a ready means of meeting the demands of the situation, whatever they may be. Should any of your contributors desire to continue their gifts, notwithstanding the present position, they may be assured that their contributions will be expended sooner or later to great advantage, since in any event relief in many forms will doubtless be required after the war.

8. Finally I wish for myself and my colleagues of the Administration of the Commission to express my sincere appreciation of all the

untiring, faithful, and truly beautiful work you have done as organizers and managers, and of the generous response which your long lists of donors have made. My association with you has been to me an inspiring revelation of the great heart of America.

To you as individuals and as organized groups I express my heartfelt thanks.

HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman, Commission for Relief in Belgium

The Commission suggests that you give the above letter from Mr. Hoover as wide publicity as possible.

DOCUMENT NO. 590

Telegram,[66] HOOVER TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM, *expressing appreciation of the work of the Committee in support of the Commission throughout the British Empire*

WASHINGTON, 9 June 1917

National Committee
for Relief in Belgium
London

I should like to express not only my appreciation of the magnificent work of the National Committee during those years of our intimate association but also my gratitude for their resolute and continuous personal support to myself and colleagues of the C.R.B. The vision of great Englishmen in their fidelity to the succor of the people of Belgium in their dreadful suffering and peril has been daily proof to the American people of the rightness of the Allied cause and has contributed in no mean measure to the final conviction of our people that we must enter the struggle to defend civilization from military domination, the character of which the Germans have so effectively demonstrated in Belgium.

HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 591

Letter, SECRETARY NEWTON D. BAKER TO HOOVER, *agreeing to Hoover's proposal that the newly drafted men at cantonments be given an opportunity to turn over their discarded civilian clothing for Belgium*

WASHINGTON, 4 October 1917

Mr. Herbert C. Hoover
United States Food Administration
Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. HOOVER:

I am just in receipt of your letter of October 3rd on the subject of securing the cast-off civilian clothing of the drafted men now enter-

[66] Read on the occasion of the Second Annual Meeting of the National Committee on the 15th June 1917 when its active operations for contributions for general relief were suspended.

ing the Cantonments for use by the Commission for Relief in Belgium in response to a pathetic appeal from Belgium for clothing which that Commission has received.

I think that your suggestion is a most excellent one and shall do all that I can to assist you in carrying it out. I enclose herewith copy of a telegram which I have directed to be sent to all commanding generals of the National Army Cantonments.

Very sincerely yours

(Signed) NEWTON D. BAKER
Secretary of War

DOCUMENT NO. 592

Letter, HOOVER TO HENRY P. DAVISON, *describing the exhaustion of clothing in occupied Belgium and Northern France and asking for the co-operation of the American Red Cross in the collection of used clothing*

WASHINGTON, 1 March 1918

Henry P. Davison, Esquire
Chairman of the Red Cross War Council
The American Red Cross, Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. DAVISON:

The practical entire exhaustion of cloths, clothing, shoes, and leather in occupied Belgium and Northern France, and the shortage of these necessities in the world's markets, are making it increasingly difficult for the Commission for Relief in Belgium to keep clothed and shod the unfortunate people of these occupied territories. In addition to new material we need gifts of used and surplus clothing and shoes, blankets, flannel, cloth, etc., in large quantities from the people of the United States.

As the Commission has allowed most of its local committees scattered over the United States to disband because of the financial arrangement made last June with our Government, it occurs to me that the Red Cross, with its existing elaborate system of local organizations, would be in excellent situation to conduct this clothing campaign for us. Will you lend the machinery of this organization to collect for the Commission from the people of the country the articles needed by it in its relief work?

Where our own local committees are still intact, we should prefer to give them the choice of carrying on the campaign in their own localities, or of working in co-operation with the Red Cross, or of turning it over entirely to the Red Cross.

From your repeated cordial offers of the co-operation of the American Red Cross in any of the charitable work of our Commission, I have no doubt of the answer you will make to our present request.

Faithfully yours

(Signed) HERBERT HOOVER

DOCUMENT NO. 593

Letter, DAVISON TO HOOVER, *in answer to the preceding*

WASHINGTON, 4 March 1918

Mr. Herbert Hoover
The Commission for Relief in Belgium
Washington

MY DEAR MR. HOOVER:

In response to your request on behalf of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, the Red Cross will be glad to undertake the collection of used and surplus clothing and other articles for the use of the Commission in its relief work in occupied territories in France and Belgium.

We have set aside the week of March 18th to March 25th for a special campaign for this purpose. We feel certain that the people of the United States will respond generously, and that we will be able to collect for the Commission such quantities of clothing and other articles as it requires to satisfactorily carry on its work of relief. We will send out your appeal to all our Chapters through our Divisional organization. Where your local committees still exist, we trust that this work may be done by such committees in co-operation with our local Chapters in order that the Chapters may feel that they too have a part in this great work.

Cordially yours

(Signed) H. P. DAVISON
Chairman, Red Cross War Council

DOCUMENT NO. 594

Letter,[67] W. B. POLAND TO SIR WILLIAM GOODE, *proposing that the National Committee's organization take charge of the proposed campaign for used clothing in the United Kingdom*

LONDON, 7 March 1918

The Honorary Secretary
The National Committee for Relief in Belgium
London

DEAR SIR WILLIAM:

The National Committee is undoubtedly aware of the very distressing need for clothing in the occupied territories of Belgium and Northern France. Whatever clothing these countries have received

[67] On the same date the Commission requested the National Committee to support special charities in Belgium. These requests were granted, with the result that both appeals received splendid support throughout the United Kingdom.

since the beginning of the war has been sent in under the auspices of the Commission for Relief in Belgium and has been entirely inadequate to supply the population. They have been forced to rely almost entirely upon their personal possessions at the beginning of the war, which have now been exhausted. It has been found impossible to obtain the necessary money for the purchase of the *new* clothing needed and world conditions make it impossible for us to secure this new clothing, even were the money available. We have therefore organized an old-clothing campaign and are appealing to the people in the United States on behalf of the people of the occupied territories. We are anxious that a similar appeal be made in the United Kingdom. The necessary authority has been received from the British Government and we should like the National Committee, through its organization, to take charge of such a campaign. We wish to appeal for old clothing for men, women, and children.

Will you be kind enough to bring this subject before your Executive Committee and advise us whether you are willing to undertake this benevolent work on behalf of the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

Faithfully yours

(Signed) W. B. Poland
Director for Europe

In the summer of 1918 requests came to the Commission for further aid to the special charities in Belgium, and Hoover sent out one more appeal for this purpose in July of that year. The response to Hoover's letter was particularly gratifying. Not only did a number of committees take upon themselves the responsibility of supporting special charities but many individuals made gifts[68] of generous amounts.

DOCUMENT NO. 595

Letter, Hoover to his Associates of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, *requesting continued contributions for special charities in Belgium not provided for under general relief*

New York, 8 July 1918

To My Associates of the Commission for Relief in Belgium:

On May 14th, 1917, I advised you of the financial arrangement with the United States Government whereby funds were provided for the general rationing of the civilian population of Belgium and

[68] William Bingham, 2nd, gave $12,000 for the Brussels Relief Fund; Theodore Roosevelt sent $1,000 of the Nobel Peace Prize to Hoover for Belgian relief.

occupied France. At the end of six months, because of the further exhaustion of the Belgian and French people and the heightened cost of food and shipping, we were obliged to request an increase in the loans.

In my circular I stated my hope that the various committees of the Commission for Relief in Belgium that had already accomplished so much would hold together despite the new financial arrangement in order to support certain needed special charities and be in position to meet any large emergency. We have had many concrete evidences through such support of the continued interest of our committees in the welfare of the civilian population in the occupied regions; and, over and above the general rationing of these people, the Commission itself has helped to maintain certain internal charities, such as The Little Bees (children's canteens), Assistance to Young Mothers, Discreet Assistance (aid to impoverished persons and families of certain character), Assistance to Artists, War Orphans, Old-Clothing Workshops, Lace Workers, Anti-Tuberculosis League, etc.

In this way these special charities have been maintained, without making a general public appeal for their support, the miscellaneous gifts of money being remitted directly to the charities through our Commercial Exchange Department. The managers of these charities have been in this way supplied with funds for the purchase of local products and to meet special needs. All our information from the "inside" shows how urgently these gifts have been needed and how greatly they have been appreciated. I may quote a few sentences from a late letter from Brussels to our London Office:

> Please do not forget when you write to New York to beg all our devoted friends on the other side to continue their campaign to get money for our charity funds. You cannot imagine the good that we are doing. I have told you so several times already, but I want to repeat it over and over again. For the moment we are well provided, but in two or three months many of our important gifts will be exhausted, and, if by that time we do not get more we will have to give up lots of families who look upon us as their only hope.

It can be readily understood that in providing a general ration for an entire nation the rigorous system necessary to handle such a great project can make little provision for special cases and special needs. These cases, running into hundreds of thousands, of sick and defective children, of infirm old men and women, of the many and increasing victims of tuberculosis, and the host of other individuals requiring special food and care, cannot be taken care of by the general funds. Nor can these general funds be used to provide the small pittances which might justifiably be given to various people in order to keep them off of the soup-lines and allow them to maintain the last shreds of home life and self-respect.

It is for all these cases that the funds provided for the special charities named and others like them are used. There is an increasing need for funds for these cases. The gifts are running low, and our last reports show that the soup-lines of Belgium have increased from one and a half to two and a half million persons. This means

that more and more unfortunates have had to give up their last bit of independence.

For three and a half years, these special charities have been maintained by the voluntary services of thousands of splendid men and women in Belgium, who have given unsparingly of their time and energy to carry them on. In all this time they have always looked to the Commission for Relief in Belgium as a definite source of financial aid in times of emergency. We have never refused this aid and cannot now. I should like to see these special charities not only continued, but enabled to expand their usefulness.

Through this memorandum, therefore, I wish not only to convey my appreciation of the assistance already given by the many generous people of America, but to express the hope that this assistance will be continued and increased. I wish particularly to remove any doubt as to the acceptability of contributions to the Commission for Relief in Belgium for the special purposes above indicated.

I, therefore, again announce that any funds donated for these special charities will be gladly received by the C.R.B. and promptly transmitted by it directly to Belgium. This transmission of money is absolutely safeguarded by virtue of an agreement between the belligerent governments, the C.R.B., and the neutral (Spanish and Dutch) protecting Ministers in Brussels.

HERBERT HOOVER
Chairman, The Commission for Relief in Belgium

The following telegram dispatched to all committees and friends of the Commission terminated the Commission's appeals for financial aid in America and in April 1919 the charitable accounts of the Commission were closed.

DOCUMENT NO. 596

Telegram, COMMISSION TO ITS SUBSCRIBERS, *quoting Hoover's report on the conditions in Belgium and Northern France and terminating benevolent financial assistance*

NEW YORK, 20 December 1918

Mr. Hoover has cabled that together with Mr. Poland, Director for Europe, a survey of the entire Belgian situation has now been completed. It is a matter of great satisfaction to know that the work of the C.R.B. during the past four years in supplying general sustenance to the entire population and in granting financial aid to various internal charities with the additional assistance rendered since the evacuation has prevented actual starvation in Belgium. It can be positively stated that the whole population has passed through this ordeal without irreparable damage to the national health except for certain classes where there has been undernutrition and where tuberculosis has developed. The Belgians are now prepared to remedy these conditions themselves. The most cheering factor in the

condition of the population is the health of the two million Belgian children who have been the object of our utmost solicitude during the past four years of occupation. It can be said without reserve that the health of the children in Belgium today is perhaps even better than under normal conditions as the result of the special measures in feeding applied to them through your generosity. The Belgians have naturally been anxious that external charity should cease the moment their own Government and their private resources were restored and they themselves placed in a position to handle the situation. Mr. Hoover now informs us that this fortunate condition for which we have long been working has arrived and the Belgians would be embarrassed by adding further to the obligations for which they are already deeply grateful. He assures us that all Belgian officials and heads of committees are in agreement that Belgium does not desire further charity from the world except immediate supplies of second-hand clothing. In view of this direct and positive assurance that no further benevolent financial assistance is required we desire to advise you that we cannot solicit further funds for Belgium. We propose to issue Mr. Hoover's message to the press within the next few days but are anxious that you should have this advice before information is given to the public. We shall, of course, continue to ship food and clothing as heretofore, purchased with funds provided by the Belgian and French Governments, and we shall solicit used clothing in large amounts.

EDGAR RICKARD
Acting Chairman, Commission for Relief in Belgium

8. *Summary of Cash Donations and Gifts in Kind. 1914–1919*

The tables which follow are the total charitable contributions to the Commission 1914–1919. Documents 597, 598, and 599 show the value of gifts in cash and kind forwarded to the Commission by regional and local committees all over the world. These tables give an indication of the individual and collective effort of the groups supporting Belgian relief. The full record of the work of these numerous bodies is in the reports which they prepared when their activities ended.

CASH DONATIONS AND GIFTS IN KIND
1914–1919

Cash Donations	$20,490,321.80
Gifts in Kind	31,800,513.71
Total Charitable Contributions	
Cash, Food, and Clothing	$52,290,835.51

ANALYSIS BY COUNTRIES

United States of America		
States, cities, and possessions		$32,109,863.69
British Empire		
Australia	$6,210,288.08	
British West Indies	36,209.98	
Canada	4,153,723.87	
India	197,692.22	
New Zealand	2,462,272.07	
South Africa	175,294.84	
United Kingdom	5,739,349.10	
Sundry Colonies	77,367.99	19,052,198.15
Other Countries		
Argentine Republic	$ 200,608.77	
Belgian Relief Fund*	485,000.00	
Belgian Orphans' Fund*	65,475.00	
Belgium	56,390.89	
Brazil	16,233.33	
China	20,724.13	
Holland	168,662.63	
Italy	34,993.66	
Katanga (Belgian Congo)	32,980.00	
Spain	39,455.13	
Sundry	8,250.13	1,128,773.67
Total charitable contributions		$52,290,835.51
I. Mobilized through the Commission's London Office		
a) Received direct from independent committees, institutions, and individuals by the London Office (see Document 597)		$ 6,625,386.74
b) Received through the National Committee for Relief in Belgium (see Document 598)		11,144,421.78
II. Mobilized through the Commission's New York Office (see Document 599)		34,521,026.99
Grand total, charity		$52,290,835.51

* Chiefly American and British contributors.

DOCUMENT NO. 597

Analysis of Contributions in cash and in kind direct to the London office of the Commission in 1914–1919. Abstract of Commission's annual reports and, specifically, "The Commission for Relief in Belgium. Balance Sheet and Accounts," Oct. 1914–30th Sept. 1920.

Contributions in Cash and in Kind Direct to London Office of the Commission, 1914–1919

Committees, Institutions, and Individuals	Food and Clothing	Cash	Committee Total	State Total
Argentine Republic	$ 190,656.87	$ 9,951.90	$ 200,608.77	$ 200,608.77
Australia				
New South Wales	50,642.25	742,010.01	792,652.26	
Queensland	.....	50,784.02	50,784.02	
South Australia	.....	97,727.50	97,727.50	
Tasmania	.....	6,305.00	6,305.00	
Victoria	1,571.40	423,162.50	424,733.90	
Western Australia	.....	11,640.00	11,640.00	1,383,842.68
Belgium				
Antwerp	8,545.70	.....	8,545.70	
Belgium	22,800.90	.....	22,800.90	
Ghent	18,545.29	.....	18,545.29	
Ostend	6,499.00	.....	6,499.00	56,390.89
Belgian Relief Fund	.....	485,000.00	485,000.00	485,000.00
Belgian Orphans' Fund	.....	65,475.00	65,475.00	65,475.00
Brazil	16,233.33	.....	16,233.33	16,233.33
Canada	1,518,564.11	.....	1,518,564.11	1,518,564.11
China	.....	20,724.13	20,724.13	20,724.13
Holland	.....	168,662.63	168,662.63	168,662.63
India	727.50	.....	727.50	727.50
Italy	.....	34,993.66	34,993.66	34,993.66
Katanga	.....	32,980.00	32,980.00	32,980.00
New Zealand	1,139.75	7,760.00	8,899.75	8,899.75
Spain	.....	39,455.13	39,455.13	39,455.13
United Kingdom				
England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland	1,493,640.93*	1,090,938.10	2,584,579.03	2,584,579.03
Sundry	1,779.51	6,470.62	8,250.13	8,250.13
Totals	$3,331,346.54	$3,294,040.20	$6,625,386.74	$6,625,386.74

* This figure includes the value of gift clothing collected in 1918 through the National Committee for Relief in Belgium organization, which was revived for this purpose.

DOCUMENT NO. 598

Analysis of Contributions in cash to the London office of the Commission collected by the National Committee for Relief in Belgium from British Empire sources 1915–1919. Abstract from "The Commission for Relief in Belgium. Balance Sheet and Accounts," Oct. 1914–30th Sept. 1920 and, specifically, "The National Committee for Relief in Belgium," by Sir William Goode, K.B.E.

CONTRIBUTIONS IN CASH COLLECTED BY THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM, 1915–1919

Committees, Institutions, and Individuals	Committee Total	State Total
Australia		
Commonwealth	$ 13,710.32	
New South Wales	2,250,484.83	
Queensland	728,993.38	
South Australia	409,880.35	
Tasmania	230,986.34	
Victoria	1,072,663.12	
Western Australia	119,727.06	$4,826,445.40
British West Indies	36,209.98	36,209.98
Canada	223,996.46	223,996.46
India	196,964.72	196,964.72
New Zealand	2,453,372.32	2,453,372.32
South Africa	175,294.84	175,294.84
United Kingdom	3,154,770.07*	3,154,770.07
Sundry Colonies		
Including twenty-six separate colonies, all over the world	77,367.99	77,367.99
Totals	$11,144,421.78	$11,144,421.78

* Exclusive of the value of gift clothing collected in the United Kingdom by the Commission through the organization of the National Committee in 1918. See Document 597.

DOCUMENT NO. 599

Analysis of Contributions in cash and in kind mobilized through the New York office of the Commission 1914–1919. Abstract of Commission's annual reports; "The Commission for Relief in Belgium. Balance Sheet and Accounts," Oct. 1914–30th Sept. 1920; and specifically, "Commission for Relief in Belgium, Benevolence—New York office," by Anne Osterberg.

BENEVOLENT CONTRIBUTIONS IN CASH AND IN KIND RECEIVED THROUGH THE NEW YORK OFFICE, 1914–1919

Committees, Institutions, and Individuals	Food	Clothing	Cash	Committee Total	State Total
Alabama					
Alabama Belgian Relief Fund	$ 14,504.10	$ 5,363.50	$ 158.78	$ 20,026.38	$ 20,026.38
California					
Claremont Committee	.....	.....	4,952.83	4,952.83	
Los Angeles Belgian Relief Committee	.....	143.00	1,850.00	1,993.00	
Belgian Relief Fund, Oakland	.....	.....	550.00	550.00	
Stanford University Belgian Relief Committee	.....	573.00	9,354.75	9,927.75	
Pasadena Committee C.R.B.	.....	.....	4,388.10	4,388.10	
Redlands War Relief Association	.....	.....	337.50	337.50	
Church Federation, San Diego	.....	.....	912.98	912.98	
Belgian Relief Committee, San Francisco	261,307.52	.....	.....	261,307.52	
California Committee C.R.B., San Francisco	28,905.70	29,913.00	255,096.56	313,915.26	
Montecito War Relief Association, Santa Barbara	.....	.....	200.00	200.00	598,484.94
Canada					
Relief Work for Victims of the War in Belgium, Montreal	2,287,248.80	37,314.50	86,600.00	2,411,163.30	2,411,163.30
Colorado					
War Sufferers Relief Committee, Colorado Springs	.....	.....	1,071.05	1,071.05	
Delta Gamma War Relief Committee, Boulder	.....	.....	2,500.00	2,500.00	3,571.05
Connecticut					
Children's Tin Box Fund, Bridgeport	.....	.....	818.90	818.90	
War Relief Committee, Darien	.....	.....	66.52	66.52	
Connecticut Belgian Relief Committee, Hartford	117,615.01	1,465.00	51,685.89	170,765.90	
Salisbury-Lakeville Community Fund	.....	.....	758.11	758.11	
Auxiliary No. 3, New Canaan	.....	.....	1,154.00	1,154.00	
Yale Belgian Relief Fund, New Haven	.....	.....	1,420.00	1,420.00	174,983.43
Cuba					
Commission Organizadora para Arbitrar Fondos para los Belgas Indigentes, Santiago	.....	.....	757.66	757.66	757.66
Delaware					
Delaware Committee C.R.B., Wilmington	24,315.00	540.00	10,593.10	35,448.10	35,448.10
District of Columbia					
District of Columbia Belgian Relief Committee	2,173.90	2,851.50	4,583.85	9,609.25	9,609.25

Florida					
Belgian Relief Committee, Miami	.....	.....	129.00	129.00	129.00
Georgia					
Children's Tin Box Fund	.....	.....	166.28	166.28	166.28
Hawaii					
War Relief Committee, Honolulu	.....	10,704.00	39,216.66	49,920.66	49,920.66
Idaho					
Idaho Committee C.R.B., Stanley A. Easton	.....	.....	200.00	200.00	200.00
Illinois					
Chicago Bazaar	.....	.....	11,675.02	11,675.02	
Illinois Committee C.R.B., Chicago	342,977.86	27,127.70	.....	370,105.56	
Commission for Relief, Danville, and Westville	.....	.....	104.50	104.50	
General Mission Board, Church of the Brethren, Elgin	.....	.....	1,250.04	1,250.04	
Moline Daily Despatch, Moline	.....	.....	120.50	120.50	
University of Illinois, Urbana	.....	.....	1,563.38	1,563.38	384,819.00
Indiana					
University of Indiana, Bloomington	.....	.....	873.20	873.20	
Belgian Relief Fund, Frankfort	.....	.....	816.55	816.55	
Indiana Committee C.R.B., Indianapolis	73,304.72	8,919.00	152.83	82,376.55	
American Fund for French Wounded, Indianapolis	.....	.....	136.21	136.21	84,202.51
Iowa					
Children's Tin Box Fund, Burlington	.....	.....	15.60	15.60	
Evening Gazette, Cedar Rapids	.....	.....	3,189.05	3,189.05	
Starving Children's Fund, Conrad	.....	.....	110.00	110.00	
Belgian Relief Association of Iowa, Des Moines	123,217.90	.....	83.65	123,301.55	
People of the Diocese of Dubuque	.....	.....	7,100.00	7,100.00	
Faculty and Students of Grinnell College and Citizens of Grinnell	.....	.....	850.06	850.06	
Belgian Relief Fund, Keokuk	.....	.....	391.52	391.52	
Relief Fund, Marshalltown	.....	.....	28.17	28.17	
People of Parkersburg	.....	.....	175.00	175.00	135,160.95
Kansas					
War Relief Association, Salina	.....	.....	140.00	140.00	
Kansas Belgian Relief Fund, Topeka	240,449.14	147.50	12,961.15	253,557.79	253,697.79
Kentucky					
Belgian Relief Fund, Louisville	8,833.75	2,215.50	1,017.00	12,066.25	
Victor Bogaert, Lexington	.....	.....	3,991.04	3,991.04	16,057.29
Louisiana					
Louisiana Committee C.R.B., New Orleans	20,291.90	2,088.50	.....	22,380.40	22,380.40
Maine					
Maine State Committee C.R.B., Augusta	169.79	.....	207.09	376.88	
Carried forward	$3,545,315.09	$129,365.70	$526,474.08	$4,201,154.87	$4,200,777.99

BENEVOLENT CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED THROUGH THE NEW YORK OFFICE—*Continued*

Committees, Institutions, and Individuals	Food	Clothing	Cash	Committee Total	State Total
Brought forward	$3,545,315.09	$129,365.70	$526,474.08	$4,201,154.87	$4,200,777.99
Children's Tin Box Fund, Bangor	.....	.....	376.41	376.41	
People of Waterville	.....	.....	300.00	300.00	
People of Westbrook	.....	.....	162.34	162.34	
Belgian Relief Committee, Wilton	.....	.....	32.00	32.00	1,247.63
Maryland					
Maryland Committee for Belgian Relief, Baltimore	173,988.60	28,227.50	14,769.40	216,985.50	
Cardinal Gibbons Fund, Baltimore	.....	.....	70,000.00	70,000.00	286,985.50
Massachusetts					
Belgian Relief Committee, Amherst	.....	.....	815.00	815.00	
Congregationalist War Relief Fund, Boston	.....	.....	3,498.08	3,498.08	
Children's Tin Box Fund, Boston	.....	.....	6,824.44	6,824.44	
New England Belgian Relief Fund, Boston	469,722.80	307,714.85	208,952.19	986,389.84	
W. Cameron Forbes and Family	.....	.....	49,549.03	49,549.03	
Belgian Relief Fund, Fall River	.....	.....	47.00	47.00	
Holyoke Belgian Relief Fund	458.10	5,356.20	.....	5,814.30	
Citizens of Munson	.....	.....	80.00	80.00	
Northampton Belgian Relief Committee	.....	.....	3,024.61	3,024.61	
Springfield Committee for Belgian Relief	.....	.....	3,666.93	3,666.93	
Belgian Relief Committee, Westfield	.....	.....	338.00	338.00	1,060,047.23
Michigan					
Adrian Daily Telegram, Adrian	.....	.....	204.95	204.95	
Dollar-a-Month Club for Belgian Children, Ann Arbor	.....	.....	20,063.93	20,063.93	
Michigan Committee C.R.B., Detroit	41,672.00	33,152.00	888.46	75,712.46	
Needlework Guild of America, Detroit	.....	.....	2,382.00	2,382.00	
Delta City War Relief Association, Escanaba	.....	.....	50.00	50.00	
War Relief Society, Grand Rapids	.....	.....	595.45	595.45	
War Relief Association of Dickinson County, Iron Mountain	.....	.....	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Belgian Relief Committee, Traverse City	.....	.....	310.88	310.88	100,319.67
Minnesota					
Minnesota Committee C.R.B., Minneapolis	65,934.40	720.00	492.34	67,146.74	
Northwestern Miller Belgian Relief Fund, Minneapolis	510,233.42	.....	11,028.12	521,261.54	
Women's Committee of the St. Paul Committee C.R.B.	.....	.....	29,095.60	29,095.60	
Waseca County Committee, Waseca	.....	.....	120.00	120.00	617,623.88
Mississippi					
Mississippi Committee for Relief in Belgium, Jackson	.....	.....	94.19	94.19	
Relief Committee of Moorhead	.....	.....	6.78	6.78	100.97

Missouri					
Missouri Belgian Relief Fund, St. Louis	14,913.22	4,967.50	145.07	20,025.79	20,025.79
Montana					
Citizens of Armstead	.....	.....	46.25	46.25	
Citizens of Dillon	.....	.....	50.00	50.00	96.25
Nebraska					
Citizens of Center	.....	.....	7.00	7.00	
Citizens of Cherry County	.....	.....	429.75	429.75	
Belgian Relief Fund, Hastings	.....	.....	22.75	22.75	
Nebraska Committee C.R.B., Lincoln	41,627.20	.....	3,278.57	44,905.77	45,365.27
Nevada					
Nevada Commission Relief Belgium and France, Reno	.....	.....	2,669.66	2,669.66	2,669.66
New Hampshire					
Children's Tin Box Fund, Concord	.....	.....	87.54	87.54	
Citizens of Portsmouth	.....	.....	101.78	101.78	189.32
New Jersey					
Hillsdale-Westwood Branch C.R.B.	.....	.....	236.40	236.40	
Citizens of Lambertville	.....	.....	25.00	25.00	
Metuchen Fund for Belgian Children	.....	.....	50.00	50.00	
Moorestown Association for Relief of War Sufferers	.....	.....	16.00	16.00	
Children's Tin Box Fund, Morristown	.....	.....	115.35	115.35	
New Jersey Committee C.R.B., Newark	.....	20.00	2,909.49	2,929.49	
Citizens of Nutley	.....	.....	23.75	23.75	
Committee of the Oranges for Relief of Children of Belgium, Orange	.....	.....	28,020.65	28,020.65	
Plainfield Belgian Relief Society	7,500.00	10,000.00	7,638.73	25,138.73	
New Jersey Committee C.R.B., Princeton	.....	.....	1,706.02	1,706.02	
Summit Committee C.R.B.	.....	.....	6,413.66	6,413.66	
War Sufferers Aid Society, Upper Montclair	.....	.....	23.35	23.35	
War Relief Circle, West Milford	.....	.....	15.00	15.00	64,713.40
New York State					
Belgian Relief Fund, Albany	31,611.51	.....	1,855.83	33,467.34	
Albany War Chest	.....	.....	7,500.00	7,500.00	
Mrs. William Gorham Rice, Albany	.....	.....	4,809.67	4,809.67	
Commission for Relief in Belgium, Amsterdam	.....	.....	697.07	697.07	
War Chest Fund, Amsterdam	.....	.....	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Carried forward	$4,902,976.34	$519,523.75	$1,025,136.55	$6,447,636.64	$6,400,162.56

BENEVOLENT CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED THROUGH THE NEW YORK OFFICE—*Continued*

Committees, Institutions, and Individuals	Food	Clothing	Cash	Committee Total	State Total
Brought forward	$4,902,976.34	$519,523.75	$1,025,136.55	$6,447,636.64	$6,400,162.56
Belgian and Poles Protest Meeting, Batavia	.....	.....	108.17	108.17	
Bronxville Fund for Belgian Relief	.....	.....	3,410.00	3,410.00	
Auxiliary No. 5 (Mrs. Alexander M. White), Brooklyn	.....	.....	10,687.79	10,687.79	
Buffalo Belgian Relief Fund	46,520.09	.....	3,200.00	49,720.09	
Belgian Relief Fund, Clinton	.....	.....	175.80	175.80	
Belgian Relief Fund, Cortland	.....	.....	22.25	22.25	
Flushing Committee for Belgian Relief	.....	.....	3,464.33	3,464.33	
Belgian Relief Committee, Glens Falls	.....	.....	180.00	180.00	
Belgian Relief Committee, Groton	.....	.....	90.61	90.61	
Belgian Relief Committee, Hempstead	.....	.....	710.00	710.00	
Belgian Relief Committee, Highland Falls	.....	.....	121.57	121.57	
Huntington and Cold Spring Harbor C.R.B.	.....	.....	4,550.00	4,550.00	
Ilion-Mohawk War Chest, Ilion	.....	.....	100.00	100.00	
Tompkins County Branch C.R.B., Ithaca	.....	.....	2,600.00	2,600.00	
Tompkins County War Chest Association, Ithaca	.....	.....	1,540.00	1,540.00	
Commission for Relief in Belgium, Jamestown	.....	.....	3.00	3.00	
Auxiliary No. 2, Lake George	.....	.....	1,261.95	1,261.95	
Citizens of Leroy	.....	.....	833.25	833.25	
Mechanicsville War Chest	.....	.....	500.00	500.00	
Belgian Relief Committee, Moore's Mills	.....	.....	232.00	232.00	
Westchester County Committee C.R.B., Mt. Kisco	.....	.....	8,116.69	8,116.69	
People of New Hartford	.....	.....	225.00	225.00	
Belgian Relief Committee, Oneonta	.....	.....	210.53	210.53	
City of Oswego	.....	.....	21.00	21.00	
Oyster Bay Committee	.....	.....	3,731.00	3,731.00	
Phelps War Chest Association	.....	.....	200.00	200.00	
Clinton County Branch Belgian Relief, Plattsburg	.....	.....	321.20	321.20	
Orange County Committee Relief in Belgium, Port Jervis	.....	.....	83.32	83.32	
Belgian Relief Committee, Richfield Springs	.....	.....	87.37	87.37	
Riverdale-Spuyten Duyvil Joint Committee Belgian Relief	.....	.....	6,297.24	6,297.24	
Belgian Relief Committee, Rochester	10,096.40	.....	693.95	10,790.35	
Rockaway Peninsula Committee, Rockaway	.....	.....	4,160.20	4,160.20	
Belgian Relief Committee, Scarsdale	.....	.....	2,126.25	2,126.25	
War Relief League, Schuyler Lake	.....	.....	15.00	15.00	
Belgian Relief Committee, Syracuse	9,184.00	12,117.00	17,048.00	38,349.00	
Syracuse War Chest	.....	.....	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Citizens of Ticonderoga	.....	.....	208.61	208.61	

Central New York War Relief Committee, Utica	.....	.....	228.00	228.00	
Utica War Chest Association	.....	.....	5,000.00	5,000.00	
People of Victor	.....	.....	17.86	17.86	
Commission Belgian Relief, Walton	.....	.....	253.53	253.53	
Alleghany County Committee, Wellsville	.....	.....	43.00	43.00	
Auxiliary No. 4, White Plains	.....	.....	232.20	232.20	213,502.24
New York City					
Allied Bazaar	.....	.....	119,422.29	119,422.29	
American Fund Association	.....	.....	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Women's Auxiliary—American Institute Mining Engineers	.....	.....	2,226.24	2,226.24	
American Metal Market War Relief Fund	.....	.....	5,457.73	5,457.73	
Auxiliary No. 1, Mrs. William Emerson	.....	.....	21,066.21	21,066.21	
Auxiliary No. 4, Mrs. George E. O'Dell	.....	.....	1,254.95	1,254.95	
Belgian Kiddies—American Institute Mining Engineers	.....	.....	98,234.74	98,234.74	
Belgian Relief Fund	911,461.67	.....	.....	911,461.67	
British American War Relief Fund	.....	.....	500.00	500.00	
Century Association	.....	.....	10,868.50	10,868.50	
Chamber of Commerce	.....	.....	72,630.00	72,630.00	
Christian Herald Relief Fund	2.40	156.00	42,500.00	42,658.40	
Coffee House Club	.....	.....	1,438.50	1,438.50	
Committee of Mercy	.....	.....	1,558.46	1,558.46	
Cosmopolitan Club	.....	.....	2,871.00	2,871.00	
Daughters of the American Revolution	.....	.....	152,937.53	152,937.53	
Dollar Christmas Fund	.....	.....	212,057.91	212,057.91	
Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society	.....	.....	207.75	207.75	
Executive Committee C.R.B.	.....	.....	1,285.10	1,285.10	
Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America	.....	.....	941.79	941.79	
John A. Gade	.....	.....	45,504.25	45,504.25	
Greater New York Committee C.R.B.	20.00	19,071.25	58,063.46	77,154.71	
Readers of *Life*	.....	.....	300.91	300.91	
Literary Digest	100,000.00	.....	565,715.94	665,715.94*	
Carried forward	$5,980,260.90	$550,868.00	$2,535,290.48	$9,066,419.38	$6,613,664.80

* Includes over $114,500 contributed to the "Belgian Flour Fund," *Literary Digest*, between the 28th November 1914 and the 17th April 1915. Early in 1917 Mr. R. J. Cuddihy started the second *Literary Digest* campaign for Belgian Relief on behalf of the children of Belgium and the total direct contributions by the readers of the *Literary Digest* was increased to the splendid amount shown above. The opportunity is here taken in this connection to correct the implication in a previous publication (Gay, *Commission for Relief in Belgium, Statistical Review*, table, p. 67) that "in addition to its [*Literary Digest*] enormous publicity support throughout the war," only the sum $114,522.08 resulted. In the table referred to, the contributions through the second appeal by the *Literary Digest* were grouped under the donations of "State Committees," as were the donations of hundreds of other organizations and institutions not specifically named.

BENEVOLENT CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED THROUGH THE NEW YORK OFFICE—*Continued*

Committees, Institutions, and Individuals	Food	Clothing	Cash	Committee Total	State Total
Brought forward	$5,980,260.90	$550,868.00	$2,535,290.48	$9,066,419.38	$6,613,664.80
Miss Ethel McLean	.....	.....	5,129.00	5,129.00	
Memorial Fund Association	.....	.....	10,000.00	10,000.00	
Physicians Relief Fund	16,174.60	.....	.....	16,174.60	
National Allied Relief Committee and French Heroes Lafayette Memorial Fund	.....	.....	22,041.38	22,041.38	
Refugees Relief Fund	.....	.....	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Rockefeller Foundation	986,038.94	.....	300,000.00	1,286,038.94	
Rocky Mountain Club	.....	.....	281,351.65	281,351.65	
Children's Tin Box Fund	.....	.....	2,978.82	2,978.82	
Union Belge Société de Secours Mutuels	.....	.....	1,345.25	1,345.25	
Washington Square District Committee	.....	.....	7,754.64	7,754.64	
Women's Section C.R.B.	82,600.10	1,239.60	18,022.33	101,862.03	4,188,430.89
North Carolina					
Children's Tin Box Fund, Asheville	.....	.....	182.01	182.01	
North Carolina Committee C.R.B., Asheville	.....	209.00	895.00	1,104.00	1,286.01
North Dakota					
Belgian Relief Fund, Fargo	.....	.....	882.23	882.23	882.23
Ohio					
Logan County Relief Committee, Bellefontaine	.....	.....	95.80	95.80	
Children's Tin Box Fund, Cleveland	.....	.....	400.00	400.00	
The *Christian Standard*, Cincinnati	.....	.....	1,153.84	1,153.84	
Ohio Committee C.R.B., Cincinnati	.....	25.00	34,630.10	34,655.10	
Belgian Relief Committee, Cleveland	.....	.....	7,088.00	7,088.00	
War Council of Cuyahoga County, Cleveland	.....	.....	7,500.00	7,500.00	
Miami Belgian Relief Committee, Cleves	.....	.....	16.30	16.30	
Ohio Commission for Relief European War Sufferers, Columbus	215,699.09	102.75	5,180.16	220,982.00	
War Relief Association of Coshocton	.....	.....	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Community War Chest Association, Dayton	.....	.....	3,000.00	3,000.00	
Belgian Relief Committee, Fostoria	.....	.....	100.12	100.12	
Milton Brown Fund for Relief of War Sufferers, Glendale	.....	.....	230.00	230.00	
Hocking County War Relief Association, Logan	.....	.....	300.00	300.00	
Citizens of Medina County, Medina	.....	.....	31.58	31.58	
Licking County War Chest, Newark	.....	.....	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Citizens of Sidney	.....	.....	77.00	77.00	

Steubenville *Gazette*	.....	.....	182.50	182.50	
Toledo War Chest	.....	.....	10,000.00	10,000.00	
Mahoning War Chest, Youngstown	.....	.....	5,000.00	5,000.00	292,812.24
Oklahoma					
Citizens of Beggs	.....	.....	31.80	31.80	
Alfalfa County Committee, Cherokee	.....	.....	181.05	181.05	
Oklahoma Committee Relief of the Belgians, Oklahoma City	117.30	2,615.00	4,777.67	7,509.97	
Belgian Children's Fund, Tulsa	.....	.....	3,929.70	3,929.70	11,652.52
Oregon					
Belgian Relief Fund, Dufur	.....	.....	102.00	102.00	
Belgian Children's Fund, Portland	.....	.....	14,081.38	14,081.38	
Oregon Belgian Relief Committee, Portland	83,299.20	65,404.50	470.98	149,174.68	
Portland War Relief Fund, Portland	.....	.....	500.00	500.00	
Commission for Relief in Belgium, Salem	.....	.....	750.00	750.00	
People of Westport	.....	.....	183.00	183.00	164,791.06
Pennsylvania					
Beaver County War Service Association, Beaver Falls	.....	.....	10,000.00	10,000.00	
Bryn Mawr College Committee	.....	.....	3,368.77	3,368.77	
Société de Secours Mutuel Espoir, Charleroi	.....	.....	298.35	298.35	
Franklin Belgian Relief Fund, Franklin	.....	.....	7.90	7.90	
Belgian Relief Committee, Lancaster	.....	.....	78.91	78.91	
Belgian Children's Relief Committee of Pennsylvania	.....	.....	224,000.00	224,000.00	
Belgian Relief Fund, John Wanamaker Newspaper Men's Committee and the *Ladies Home Journal*	229,890.00	100.00	.....	229,990.00	
Pennsylvania Committee of Women C.R.B., Philadelphia Belgian Relief Committee of the Emergency Aid, Philadelphia	.....	173,836.00	164,575.94	338,411.94	
Pennsylvania Committee C.R.B., Philadelphia	186,956.77	22,026.00	118.00	209,100.77	
Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania Committee C.R.B.	1,651.90	.....	178,066.06	179,717.96	
Pottstown Committee	.....	.....	689.50	689.50	
Schuylkill County Committee Belgian Relief, Pottsville	.....	.....	2,708.85	2,708.85	
Berks County Committee C.R.B., Reading	4,033.00	1,033.60	65,188.60	70,255.20	1,268,628.15
Philippine Islands					
Philippine Islands Children's Fund, Manila	.....	.....	7,500.00	7,500.00	7,500.00
Rhode Island					
Children's Tin Box Fund, Bristol	.....	.....	4,192.87	4,192.87	
War Relief Society, East Greenwich	.....	.....	22.75	22.75	
Carried forward	$7,786,721.80	$817,459.45	$3,949,682.27	$12,553,863.52	$12,549,647.90

BENEVOLENT CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED THROUGH THE NEW YORK OFFICE—*Concluded*

Committees, Institutions, and Individuals	Food	Clothing	Cash	Committee Total	State Total
Brought forward	$7,786,721.80	$817,459.45	$3,949,682.27	$12,553,863.52	$12,549,647.90
Providence *Journal* Company	.....	.....	5,425.13	5,425.13	9,640.75
South Carolina					
South Carolina Committee C.R.B., Columbia	18,442.70	1,164.00	1,849.53	21,456.23	
Belgian Relief Committee, Georgetown	.....	.....	7.26	7.26	
Citizens of Lancaster	.....	.....	25.00	25.00	
Belgian Relief Fund of Spartansburg	.....	.....	42.87	42.87	21,531.36
South Dakota					
Citizens of Dell Rapids	.....	.....	45.00	45.00	
Daily and Weekly *Sentinel*, Madison	.....	.....	128.05	128.05	
Mennonite Community of Marion	.....	.....	4,350.00	4,350.00	
Dr. Henry K. Warren, Yankton	.....	.....	448.00	448.00	4,971.05
Tennessee					
Gaston C. Raoul, Chattanooga	.....	.....	2,208.75	2,208.75	
The *Gospel Advocate*, Nashville	.....	.....	695.68	695.68	
Tennessee Committee Belgian Relief, Nashville	.....	.....	9,594.55	9,594.55	12,498.98
Texas					
Belgian Relief Fund, Amarillo	.....	.....	232.16	232.16	
Texas Committee C.R.B., Dallas	.....	.....	1,697.72	1,697.72	
El Paso *Herald*	.....	.....	42.35	42.35	
National Patriotic League, Houston	.....	.....	7,500.00	7,500.00	
People of Mertzon	.....	.....	25.67	25.67	
People of the City of Port O'Connor	.....	.....	176.37	176.37	
Texas Belgian Relief Committee, San Antonio	.....	.....	20.00	20.00	
Mrs. Arthur Temple, Texarkana	.....	.....	339.69	339.69	10,033.96
Utah					
Women's Auxiliary American Institute Mining Engineers, Salt Lake City	.....	.....	900.00	900.00	
Deseret News, Salt Lake City	.....	.....	50.00	50.00	950.00
Vermont					
Vermont Committee C.R.B.	.....	6,001.00	1,197.94	7,198.94	7,198.94
Virginia					
Virginia Commission on Belgian Relief, Richmond	243,387.07	.....	9,608.93	252,996.00	
Sweet Briar College	.....	.....	539.00	539.00	253,535.00
Washington					
Washington State Committee for Relief in Belgium, Seattle	25,616.00	5,540.00	12,217.60	43,373.60	
Belgian Relief Committee, Spokane	.....	.....	4,110.55	4,110.55	
Belgian Relief Fund, Tacoma	.....	.....	289.07	289.07	47,773.22

West Virginia					
Kanawha War Relief Association, Charleston	.....	.....	635.00	635.00	
Pennsboro Belgian Relief Committee	.....	.....	600.00	600.00	1,235.00
Wisconsin					
Miss Rosie Tristrail, Darlington	.....	.....	951.57	951.57	
Citizens of Deer Park	.....	.....	37.50	37.50	
Wisconsin Advancement Association, Grand Rapids	.....	.....	533.44	533.44	
Committee for Relief of the Belgians, Green Bay	.....	.....	567.75	567.75	
Citizens of Hudson	.....	.....	186.05	186.05	
Patriots Fund Committee, Kenosha	.....	.....	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Women's Committee, La Crosse	.....	.....	80.00	80.00	
Madison Allies Relief Fund	.....	.....	4,144.00	4,144.00	
Belgian Relief Committee, Milwaukee	3,693.60	5,710.00	4,250.27	13,653.87	
Citizens of New Richmond	.....	.....	397.59	397.59	
Citizens of Superior	.....	.....	1,031.75	1,031.75	
Mrs. Edwin B. Frost, Williams Bay	.....	.....	3,000.00	3,000.00	25,583.52
Clothing Campaigns					
Cantonments Clothing Campaign	.....	105,946.00	.....	105,946.00	105,946.00
First and Second Red Cross Clothing Campaigns	.....	18,994,260.30	16,074.67	19,010,334.97	19,010,334.97
Individual Donations					
Food, Clothing, and Cash Received by New York Office	.....	455,225.25	2,004,921.09	2,460,146.34	2,460,146.34
GRAND TOTAL					
Benevolent Contributions Received through the New York Office	$8,077,861.17	$20,391,306.00	$6,051,859.82	$34,521,026.99	$34,521,026.99

Chapter XVI

THE CARE OF THE DESTITUTE

Like other prosperous, industrialized states, pre-war Belgium had her problems of poverty and poor relief, which she met with a fine spirit of generosity and solicitude. The destruction of property, the paralysis of economic life, the mobilization of breadwinners, and the general displacement of population which followed the German invasion enormously increased destitution, and the number of persons dependent in greater or less degree on charitable aid rose ultimately to over seventy-five per cent of the population. It fell to the relief organization, therefore, not merely to organize and administer the revictualment of the entire Belgian population but to make special provision for that part of the population deprived of the means of self-support. In order to perform these complementary functions, the Commission and the Comité National very early set up two administrative departments: a Provisioning Department with the task[1] of providing food for the entire civil population and a Benevolent Department to secure the means for the care of the destitute. The administrative structure of the Commission is described later in this book,[2] but a brief account of the relationship of these two departments is necessary for an understanding of the manner by which the care of the destitute was supported.

1. *Sources of Support*

The Provisioning Department, with the funds placed in the Commission's hands, bought, transported, and delivered in Belgium, provisions which were sold through the internal organization to that part of the population able to buy them. The Provisioning Department became possessed, in this

[1] This task of the Provisioning Department included the maintenance of importations of food, clothing, and miscellaneous supplies, as well as the control of native produce. See chapters iii and viii.

[2] Appendix I. The work of the Comité National in the care of the destitute is fully described in A. Henry, *Le ravitaillement de la Belgique*, chap. xiii. See also E. Mahaim, *Le secours chômage en Belgique pendant l'occupation allemande.*

manner, of an accumulation of local paper currency[3] the greater part of which was immediately disbursed in the support of the destitute through the Benevolent Department.

Subventions to the Benevolent Department were of two general classifications according to the source from which they were derived, i.e., public charity and state aid. Public charity included the results of the world-wide campaign for gifts which has been described in the preceding chapter as well as the "profits" of the Provisioning Department. These "profits" resulted in part from a marginal charge on sales[4] of goods to the well-to-do in Belgium as well as profits of the Commission on transactions[5] outside of Belgium and Northern France. Of quite a different origin but serving the same purpose were state aid subventions comprising the equivalent of sums turned over to the Commission by the Belgian Government for the purpose of meeting obligations of the absent Government to citizens and institutions with which it had been deprived of direct contact. These obligations included support of benevolent institutions, pensions, separation allowances, salaries of civil servants, et cetera. This constituted in reality an exchange operation with food the implement of exchange, but it was also an extremely important contribution to the handling of the problem of destitution, since it provided in part at least for certain categories of the population which had been deprived of the means of self-support. From all these sources the relief organization expended over $558,000,000 in one way or another for the care of the destitute in Belgium.

As is shown later in this chapter, the administration of benevolence in Belgium was complicated because the extent

[3] Normal exchange transactions were impossible, and this currency could not be exported.

[4] In this manner the Belgians themselves contributed to the support of the destitute. With this margin the "retail" prices in Belgium and Northern France remained the lowest in the world throughout the war. This was due largely to the volunteer service of the Commission's membership and to the special concessions granted by railways, shipping, insurance, and mercantile concerns.

[5] Profits of the Provisioning Department outside of Belgium and France resulted in part from transactions in England and France when the unrestricted submarine warfare temporarily blocked importations to Belgium. At that time the Commission sold a number of its cargoes on government orders as Rotterdam was inaccessible. See Document 237, chapter v.

of destitution steadily grew, and the degree of destitution of various groups increased, necessitating a frequent revision of the Benevolent Department's program.

In Northern France the administration was less complex. The occupied regions of France resembled a huge internment camp, where practically all economic activity and all movement of population were suspended and where measures of self-help such as were instituted in Belgium were out of the question. As is stated below the problem of relief was to provide a ration for every man, woman, and child, to insure a just distribution, and to employ a system of accounting by which at least some part of the funds advanced by the French Government as subsidies to the Commission might be recoverable by that Government after the war. Under the system of accounting set up, the Provisioning Department accepted the acknowledgment in terms of value of the French districts for the supplies imported. For this purpose prices were fixed periodically by the Commission sufficiently above the cost of the goods to create a reserve, safeguarding the people against loss in transportation and the Commission against fluctuations in the exchange. As this reserve accumulated, advances were made from time to time to the internal committees to meet special problems in the care of the destitute. This reserve, therefore, was the only source from which the Commission derived benevolent funds for Northern France,[6] since there was no general appeal for charitable contributions for this area. Unlike the system employed in Belgium, where the degree of dependency of beneficiaries was determined from day to day, in France rich and poor, partially and wholly dependent, were all provided with a ration by the Commission from the subsidies of the French Government. The obligation of the individual beneficiary to repay the Government according to his means was left for settlement after the war.

Although destitution was more general in Northern France than in Belgium (though it was never universal), the Commission's benevolent expenditures here because of this system were less, in relation to the total sums disbursed for

[6] Except gifts of clothing and certain special funds contributed during the last months of relief operations for child welfare in the devastated regions. See chapters vi and xv.

general revictualment, than in Belgium. In the case of the latter approximately $558,000,000 was expended for benevolence as compared with the total of nearly $619,000,000 secured. In the case of France the corresponding figures were approximately $55,000,000 and $274,000,000. The total disbursements for benevolent purposes of one sort or another in both Belgium and Northern France during the Commission's operations were over $615,000,000 as indicated in the following tabulation:

I. *Benevolent Account of the Commission*		
a) Public subscriptions[7] in cash and in kind		$ 52,290,835.51
b) Surplus of the Provisioning Department		
1. Surplus on sales within Belgium and France and profits of the C.R.B. outside Belgium	$111,704,000.95	
2. Profits earned inside Belgium transferred to the C.R.B. by the C.N.	23,933,542.26	
Total surplus of the Provisioning Department		135,637,543.21
Total Benevolent Account of the Commission		$187,928,378.72
II. *State Aid*		
Derived from government subsidies and dispensed in charity and financial and economic relief		427,308,768.75
Total Benevolent Expenditures		$615,237,147.47

DIVISION OF BENEVOLENT EXPENDITURE BY COUNTRY

Belgium	$558,386,857.67
Northern France	54,782,601.85
Northern Relief (Clothing)	2,067,687.95
	$615,237,147.47

The organization necessary to meet the complex problems of destitution was the product of evolution from certain fundamental principles established by Hoover before the first imports were delivered.[8] Rather than attempt to illustrate with separate documents the step-by-step development of the system by which the care of the destitute was administered, it seems advisable to present extracts from the Commission's reports on benevolent operations written while the work was in full swing.

[7] See chapter xv.

[8] Document 13, chapter i.

2. *Care of the Destitute in Belgium. 1914–1917*

DOCUMENT NO. 600

Extract from report by Professor Frank Angell[9] *on the effect of the invasion on institutions of benevolence in Belgium*

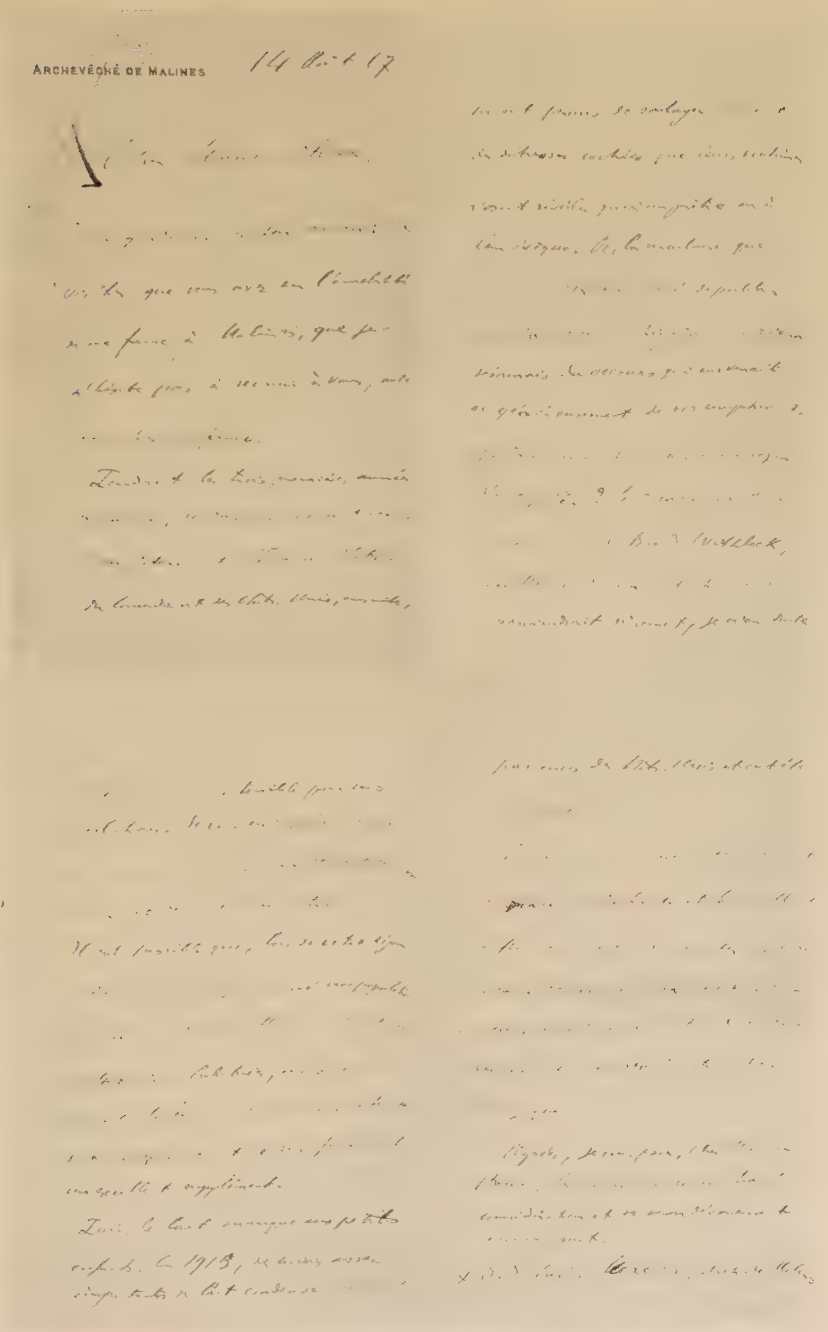
November 1916

. . . . . .

After the wave of invasion in August 1914 had rolled over Belgium and the people had so far recovered as to be able to look around to see what was to be done and could be done, they found a most extraordinary and crushing number of demands for relief and assistance, both of a general and special nature, which called for instant action. All business and industries had ceased and all the ordinary avenues of benevolence and charity had been blocked or submerged. At Mons, for example, the charitable organizations were called on to provide for an overwhelming number of individuals without wages, resources, or hope of employment. The State Insane Asylum for Women had been burned, and the inmates were roaming over the arrondissement to be cared for as best could be done in private families. The large and well-equipped city hospital had been seized by the Germans, and the Belgian sick and wounded had to be transferred to some place or any place that might give shelter. Not only in the Hainaut but in all the great industrial centers of Liège, Flanders, and Brabant the needs of the workmen thrown out of employment became crying; the usual channels for the supply and distribution of food were cut off and the necessitous part of the population was threatened with starvation. In the industrial city of Charleroi, with scanty municipal resources, fourteen hundred houses had been burned and the problem of sheltering the homeless was added to the tremendous task of providing for the unemployed. Visé, Dinant, and many other medium-sized towns had gone up in flames. Most of the villages in the agricultural portion of Luxembourg had their quota of burnt houses and barns, whilst throughout Belgium the number of buildings destroyed by incendiary flames ran into tens of thousands. Theaters and concert halls had closed; painters and sculptors were without patrons; teachers without pupils; lawyers and engineers without clients; doctors were overworked and unpaid; and, in general, classes of people peculiarly sensitive to hardship became destitute and dependent.

But beside this large number of the extraordinarily destitute of all ranks and conditions of men, there still remained the ordinary institutions of charity and benevolence of normal times—the orphanages, retreats, homes, hospitals, departments of charity, themselves overcrowded and choked by the flotsam and jetsam of the invasion and themselves calling for the succor and help which was their normal function to give. Under these circumstances there sprang

[9] Professor Angell spent the first six months of 1916 in Belgium as a C.R.B. representative, and during this time, at Hoover's request, he investigated the distribution of benevolence.



ARCHEVÊCHÉ DE MALINES

Letter, 14 August 1917, Cardinal Mercier to Hoover

into existence throughout Belgium, with extraordinary quickness, all manner of self-appointed relief organizations to meet those needs which locally seemed the most pressing—committees for benefiting the unemployed, soldiers' families, and the necessitous in general; committees for furnishing milk for babes and food for nursing mothers; committees for providing temporary shelter, for supplying clothing, medical attendance, and medicines, and for caring for orphans of the war. Consequently, when the National Committee of Secours, representing all Belgium, came into existence it found a large number of committees, provincial, cantonal, communal, already in the field and the task of the relief organizations was to supplement some and suppress others and to reconstruct, standardize, and correlate all that it officially recognized. . . . .

DOCUMENT NO. 601

Extracts of Report,[10] *April 1917, by* Hoover *on the distribution of benevolence in Belgium and in Northern France*

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF THE INVASION

The invasion began on the 6th August 1914, and reached practically its present lines by the 15th October. It set in action three prime causes of increased destitution:

a) The displacement of people due to the destruction of their homes.

b) The loss of breadwinners through death or through military mobilization.

c) The paralysis of industry and consequent unemployment.

There has been a considerable amount of home destruction throughout Belgium as the result of invasion and battle. This destruction has, proportionally, been greater in the smaller towns and villages, and the result has been that the consequent refugees have either overcrowded the houses of their immediate vicinity or migrated into the larger towns. The poorer members of this class are dependent almost wholly upon charity, not only for food but also for clothing and housing. It is difficult to estimate the number of such refugees, although the increase in population of the larger towns and the number of destroyed homes would indicate from 200,000 to 300,000.

The Belgian authorities at one time or another have mobilized probably 250,000 soldiers, and in addition considerable loss of civilian life has resulted from the invasion. Obviously many of these men had families relying on them which are now dependent upon charity.

The major source of destitution due to the war, however, arises under the third heading. Belgium, with its pre-war population of 8,000,000, comprised the most highly industrialized area in the world, and in peace times constituted a beehive of human activity.

[10] Given in full in *The Commission for Relief in Belgium, Special Departmental Reports.*

Directly or indirectly, more than half the population is, in normal times, dependent on the conversion of raw material into manufactures for export abroad. The stagnation of industry induced by military occupation and the rigid blockade necessarily resulted in the total cessation of manufacturing dependent upon imports and exports. Furthermore, the manufactures for home consumption were diminished through the prevention of imports of raw material and, again, these interferences reacted on the purchasing power of the people and diminished the amount of employment in those enterprises in which raw material and manufactures are of local origin and consumption. A few statistics will emphasize the situation. The normal population of Belgium is 652 persons per square mile. The gross value of exports and imports per capita in 1912 was $209. These figures may be compared with Germany, for example, with a population of 310 per square mile and exports and imports of $77 per capita, or, again, with the United States, with a population of 31 per square mile and exports and imports per capita in 1913 of $44. It is also of interest to note that the gross tonnage of imports (foodstuffs excluded) into Belgium for 1912 was nearly 27,000,000 tons, and the tonnage of exports was nearly 19,000,000 tons.

Initially, the railways were entirely taken over by the invading army for military use, and telegraphs, posts, etc., were suspended, the population being largely interdicted from movement. The railways are now partially open to commercial traffic, and more movement is allowed in the occupation zone. Nevertheless, the total cessation of import and export activities has brought the industrial clock practically to a stop, and has induced among the industrial population an extraordinary percentage of unemployment, and among the intermediate classes a gradual exhaustion of resources.

PRE-WAR BELGIAN BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS

In order to gain a clear understanding of the organization required to meet the conditions imposed by destitution arising out of the war, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the character of the normal Belgian institutions for dealing with pauperism in its various phases, because, in creating an organization to mitigate the present situation, it has been the policy to support existing institutions, and only to inject new ones in so far as they have been rendered necessary.

Unfortunately, the sharp political and religious divisions existing among the people before the war prevented that co-ordination, centralization, and control of institutions essential to effectiveness and economy. In developing the existing war-emergency organization such centralization has had to be imposed, embracing all elements of the community and devoid of political and religious control.

The pre-war institutions dealing with destitution may be divided into four classes:

1. State institutions
2. Religious and lay foundations
3. La Commission des Hospices
4. Les Bureaux de Bienfaisance

It should be noted that the number of institutions engaged in the care and support of the destitute, feeble-minded, orphans, and various forms of pauperism and vagabondage is larger in Belgium in proportion to the population than in any other country.

The most important institutions directly under the State are the two great labor colonies at Merxplas and Hoogstraeten. The colony at Merxplas is distinctly a penal colony, while the one at Hoogstraeten is chiefly for old and infirm persons. In Belgium vagrancy is a penal offense and persons guilty of such offense are sent to one or other of these colonies, so that very little vagabondage exists in normal times. The State also supports, in some measure, through subventions, the Bureaux de Bienfaisance described later.

A great number of religious and lay foundations exist in Belgium for various conditions arising out of indigence. These have independent incomes from property and public benevolence and, furthermore, many of them undertake the care of orphans and the infirm on behalf of the Bureaux de Bienfaisance for stipulated payments per annum. Some idea may be gained of their importance by reference to the fact that there are six hundred such institutions engaged in the care of orphans alone.

La Commission des Hospices administers the established almshouses, dispensing what in England is known as "Indoor Relief"; these exist in approximately 330 communes. They are distinctly communal institutions and are financed from private charity, income from conferred property, communal subventions, and, in a minor degree, from the "Common Fund" referred to later on.

Les Bureaux de Bienfaisance exist in every one of the 2,700 communes into which Belgium is divided, and have the duty of providing for all poverty otherwise unrelieved. They are managed by a committee appointed by the communal council, are the recipients of public charity, and, in many cases, are possessed of property and incomes. If the revenue from these sources is insufficient, the deficiency is met from the exchequer of the commune concerned. The handling of individual cases of indigence or pauperism is extremely complicated. The bureaux may give direct assistance in cash or in kind, or may give subsidies in respect of special cases to any of the other institutions mentioned above, or they may enlist the assistance of such other institutions in their own activities. In general, these agencies form a catchall to deal with any cases not cared for by the other charitable and official foundations in the country.

In order to distribute the burden of the care of the blind, the deaf and dumb, the lunatics, etc., more fairly between the rich and poor communes, a "Common Fund" has been established in each province to which all the communes must contribute sums, varying according to their population and income, and to which the National Government adds a quarterly subvention.

Altogether these institutions comprise an extraordinary network of charitable effort covering the entire country and normally providing for the infinite variety of indigents to which all countries are subject. The total number of organizations in respect of all classes of institutional effort probably exceeds 4,000, caring for about 300,000 persons.

There are 2,770 communes and hameaux in the occupied portion of Belgium, having an average population of about 650 families each. Therefore, the number under each committee is not large. Furthermore, certain characteristics of Belgian social and economic life aid in determining the precise position of each inhabitant. Chief among these is fixture of residence. This condition has been made possible in Belgium by the enormous development of local or vicinal tramways interconnecting the towns and villages throughout the country with a fine network of narrow-gauge railroads operated at low rates of fare. In addition, the standard-gauge railroads give tickets to laborers at remarkably low rates, a commutation ticket over a distance of 20 kilometers good for six round trips a week costing 1.50 francs, or about one-fifth of a cent a mile. The outcome is that the workman, unable to find employment in his own town, seeks it in adjoining districts without giving up his local residence, to which he returns each night or week-end. Many of the coal miners in the vicinity of Charleroi come from various districts of Flanders, and about 40 per cent of the workmen living in Louvain find employment in places from three to twenty-five miles distant from that town. The local stability of the labor in Belgium therefore makes possible a detailed knowledge of individual circumstances that would be impossible with a constantly shifting working population.

The notable pre-war development of charitable institutions, both public and private, and the great numbers of co-operative associations of one kind or another, together with the highly developed communal organization in Belgium, have supplied means and personnel for meeting the present conditions to an extent that probably could not be realized by any other civilized people. The possible effect of all this charity in developing pauperism, even in normal times, or in sapping the spirit of independence, is a question aside from the intent of this report. The point to be emphasized here is that when this unparalleled increase in the number of unemployed and impoverished men and women and helpless children arose in Belgium, there was at hand an army of helpers versed in the organization of relief work and skilled in the economic distribution of alms.

RELIEF CLASSIFICATION OF THE POPULATION

From the relief point of view, the present population of about 7,400,000 may be divided into the following classes:

a) The commercial, professional, and better-to-do classes generally, including that part of the community which derives support directly from them. Roughly estimated, this section comprises 2,000,000 persons.

b) The agricultural class, estimated at 1,000,000 persons.

c) Those whose breadwinners are at the front or have been lost during the various phases of the war, estimated at approximately 350,000 persons; also internal refugees, probably 200,000, partially coming under this category and partially under *d*.

d) The industrial and semi-professional workers and that portion of the population in turn dependent upon them, estimated to total roughly 3,500,000.

e) The normal pauper class comprising the infirm, orphans, etc., probably 300,000 persons.

The commercial, professional, and better-to-do classes generally have reserves of credit upon which they can, in the main, support themselves, given that food supplies are available for purchase. The problem of their relief, however, does not end at this point, because the local issues of paper currency are not convertible for the purchase of foodstuffs abroad, except in so far as they can be converted by a limited amount of permitted commercial exchange or, with the assistance of foreign governments, be interpreted into gold. As time goes on even this class shows signs of exhaustion and it has been necessary to evolve measures for its support in certain directions.

The agricultural class embraces about 1,000,000 people; these are in a state of greater economic security than any other class of the community, largely because the habit of the European peasant is to maintain himself directly out of the production of his fields. From the 1915 and 1916 harvests the intensive cultivation in Belgium resulted in the production of a surplus of foodstuffs beyond the requirements of the agricultural class and, as these foodstuffs have been saleable at considerably more than normal prices, this section of the population is probably in a better economic situation than before the war.

Those who have lost their breadwinners through mobilization and death might or might not have fallen into destitution had the breadwinner remained behind, since he might have been unable to find employment; but be that as it may, there can be no question about their total dependence on charity in the present situation.

As stated above, the industrial population provides the most difficult problems of destitution. This population falls into two classes, one including those without any resources whatever, and another somewhat smaller class composed of those who from time to time are able to contribute to their own support. A considerable number of manufacturing concerns, whose pre-war stocks of raw material escaped military requisition, were able for some time to give a measure of employment to their workmen. These stocks, however, are now long since exhausted. In February 1917 the occupying authorities took measures to close all establishments employing more than twelve men, save public utilities and a certain few exceptions. Industry in Belgium is therefore at a standstill.

There is, of course, some surviving activity in the country, through small commerce, maintenance of public officials, operation of tram lines and municipal services, the partial operation of coal mines, etc. During the planting and harvest seasons a certain amount of temporary work is afforded on farms. Many families also have small fields or garden plots, from which they contribute something to their upkeep, and many of the working population possessed accumulated savings, out of which they have been able to support themselves in diminishing measure.

Extent of destitution.—It will be appreciated that any exact census of "destitute" or "partially destitute" is wholly impossible. Were communications not under such complete restriction it might be

possible to determine at a given day the number wholly dependent on the benevolent relief that particular day, and those partially dependent. The number would obviously be different the next day. Moreover, the number might be the same but the individuals different. An approximation, however, of the number who receive help in some form, directly or indirectly, from the Relief Organization can be made from the data presented in the following pages. To review the facts given:

Under the Communal Committees the number on the bread line, men, women, and children without work and dependent entirely on public charity because of industrial stagnation, is, approximately, 1,700,000. The families who are without their breadwinners owing to the war amount to about 350,000 individuals. Those unemployed receiving supplemental allowances amount to about 1,600,000. The apparent totals on this division are therefore about 3,650,000. There is, however, a considerable overlap for the supplemental allowances, which are more often than not given to those who are assisted at the canteens. On the other hand, some thousands of people are supported by work in the clothing establishments, and many others not otherwise in receipt of relief receive clothing and shelter. However, an approximate elimination for overlap indicates that at least 2,700,000 different individuals are being helped by the Communal Committees.

Under the Special Committees and established institutions the numbers not included above are approximately as follows. Children under special care total about 31,000. The number of pre-war orphans, blind, insane, infirm, etc., under the Bureaux de Bienfaisance and pre-war charity organization generally is probably 300,000. The officers' families, school teachers, artists, doctors, foreigners, lace-workers, etc., comprise approximately 160,000 individuals. The constantly increasing number of refugees arriving in Belgium from the North of France at this date has attained a total of 200,000. This division in all, therefore, covers approximately 700,000 persons not otherwise provided for.

Under the help given to the loan institutions, and through the operation of special remittances, a large number are saved from falling into actual destitution. The number thus assisted now averages about 600,000 persons. Altogether it seems that, on a conservative basis, the number of persons receiving help in some form through the organization approximates nearly 4,000,000 individuals, or over 50 per cent of the entire population.

It will at once be realized that the efficient distribution of benevolence depends upon the thoroughly competent assessment of the economic position of every claimant to charity, and the adjustment of help to the minimum absolutely required to supplement his own resources. To accomplish this a large measure of local autonomy as to details is required, with local administrators of high character and ability who are familiar with individual needs, as well as a careful supervision of the local authorities by a superstructure of inspecting and accounting officials.

Every social worker will recognize that such discrimination is vitally necessary in order to prevent waste and the demoralization

due to imposition and unnecessary idleness. The determination of actual needs calls for inquiries into the manner of life and circumtances of each applicant, almost inquisitorial in their intimacy, and demands the co-operation of a great number of people of local knowledge, skilled in treating the problem of unemployment and pauperism.

RELIEF ORGANIZATION FOR BENEVOLENCE

Distributing agencies.—In order to meet the various requirements of distribution two classes of agency have been created, and close co-operation established with a third:

a) Communal Charity Committees
b) Special charity committees
c) Support of public services and state institutions.

Communal Charity Committees.—In developing the organization the first consideration has been to act through established institutions and only to inject new organisms when the old could not be applied to the conditions imposed by the present situation. Moreover, the fitting of necessary new organisms to the old has required a great deal of local autonomy, so that the details of procedure are by no means uniform in the various provinces and districts. The extension of war-charity organization beyond the old established institutions has been accomplished in the main by the creation of new local Charity Committees in each commune. These committees are not to be confounded with the constitutionally elected communal councils nor with the Bureau de Bienfaisance, but, like the Provisioning Committees, they are a new injection into the situation. They are non-partisan—i.e., made up of equal representation from each of the political parties—Liberal, Clerical, and Socialist. They also contain representatives from the ranks of employers and employees. The secretary of the local Bureau de Bienfaisance is usually secretary of the new Charity Committee, which, in addition, contains members of the communal council, often the burgomaster, and representatives of the various trades. The committees, therefore, represent a considerable collection of information applicable in determining the probable condition of the petitioners for relief and assistance. The control and direction of these committees is secured through the implements of subvention and inspection.

The Communal Charity Committees are the keystone of the charitable distribution. While certain departmental controls have been set up by the central organization and a good many regulations laid down, when all is said and done it is the 2,770 communal committees who distribute about 75 per cent of the charity and on whom rests the primal responsibility of maintaining the ideals of the Relief Organization and preserving it free from the taint of corruption or incompetence. Blemishes of this kind, however, have been of extraordinary rarity; on the contrary, the self-denial with which all classes in Belgium have devoted themselves to the work with increasing efficiency ever since its initiation merits a tribute greater than words can convey.

The controlling factor in the whole vast scheme of relief is the "state of need" of the individual, and it is only by intimate investigation and local knowledge that this can be determined. In the correctness of this determination lies the organization's security against leakage and wastage, whether through carelessness or ignorance or fraud, whether deliberate or induced by necessity. Moreover, it is a determination calling for the greatest judgment, tact, and sympathy on the part of the committees. No excuse is needed for setting out in some detail the considerations and precautions that enter into these inquiries, and for this purpose a description of the procedure in such a representative commune as that of Mons is given. When an applicant presents himself at the office of the Communal Charity Committee to ask for assistance, he is required to have with him all the documents in his possession bearing on his civic status and means of subsistence (*carte d'identité,* age, residence, photograph, etc.), certificates of pension (old age, sickness, and accident), certificates of assistance from the Bureau de Bienfaisance, a list of his holdings of property such as his house, land, calves, heifers, pigs, chickens, etc., together (if married) with his marriage certificate and the names and ages of his wife and children (if any). These documents are checked by records in possession of the communal committee, consisting of employers' lists of workmen (showing period of employment and wages), lists of benevolent societies, particularly the Bureaux de Bienfaisance, pension lists, and other records of the commune, including those of the police. The committee at Mons has the assistance of a force of twenty-six citizens forming a local Commission de Surveillance, the greater part of which is representative of the different trades and employers. When the committee desires more information as to an applicant than is given by the recorded documents, a member of this commission is sent specially to report. This particular commission, through its membership, reports according to trades and industries. On the other hand, in the neighboring town of Jemappes the commission reports by districts. Above this "Commission de Surveillance" comes a controller (paid 3 to 4 francs a day) appointed by the Communal Charity Committee and reporting directly to it. He takes up difficult cases and superintends the work of the volunteer members. The communal committee itself forms a sort of interlocking directorate. The secretary at Mons, for instance, is also secretary of the local Bureau de Bienfaisance and, as such, is the man in the community best acquainted with the class from which the unemployed come. One of the members is also a member of the regular communal council, well acquainted with the communal records, and he assists in checking up the applicants' financial status. Above the communal committee and its inspectors comes a hierarchy of controllers representing the superior committees—arrondissemental, provincial, Comité National, and the Commission for Relief in Belgium—who travel through the commune checking up the work of subordinate committees.

Up till September last the assistance was never in cash, except where a family had lost its breadwinner by the war, but always in the form of "bons" (orders good for certain amounts of merchan-

dise). The "bons" could be presented either at the C.R.B. food-stores or at the Communal Co-operative stores (where native foodstuffs are sold). In some villages and towns the "bons" were accepted by the trade and became current money within the town. Namur Province, to avoid this monetary confusion and as a result of experience, in place of the "bons" adopted a book in which were entered all grants of assistance. To further simplify the system, however, and to obviate the necessity of accounting for "bons" the Comité National decided, September 1st, 1916, to allow the charity payments in the form of cash.

The communal committees do not receive their entire resources from the central organization, particularly in the matters of general assistance, clothing, and shelter, the aim of the central organization being to supplement the resources of local charity only so far as is absolutely necessary, just as the communal committees supplement the resources of the individual.

Special charity committees.—In addition to the Communal Charity Committees a wide class of special committees devoted to the special problems created by war conditions has been formed. These special committees may or may not work in co-operation with the communal committees, or with the pre-war institutions, as the need may be.

They are given subventions from the central administration to supplement other resources obtained by direct public benevolence, or, in some cases, by remunerative production. They expend their assistance either directly or through the agency of special subcommittees, the communal committees, or the pre-war benevolent institutions.

Support of public services and special institutions.—Under this head are grouped a widely extended series of operations in the nature of loans which can be liquidated after the war, but which in the present emergency have none the less a benevolent aspect.

DIVISION OF RELIEF MEASURES BETWEEN PUBLIC CHARITY AND GOVERNMENTAL SUBSIDY

At the outset it was hoped that the need for relief would continue for only a few months. The period, however, has extended beyond all expectations, and, in consequence, three special conditions have developed. First, the amount of destitution has increased, and the rise in the prices of foodstuffs and transport has further augmented its volume. Second, generous as the world's charity has been, the required measure of relief could not be continued without substantial regular assistance of a volume only to be compassed by governmental subvention. Third, the problem of converting receipts from food sales into external credit outran the available commercial exchange. It was therefore agreed in February, 1915, that the British and French Governments would advance monthly in the form of a loan £500,000 and 12,500,000 francs respectively to the Belgian Government at Havre for the service of the Commission for Relief in Belgium. These advances have been made regularly through 1915

and 1916. In the early part of 1917 they were slightly increased to cover larger expenditures made by the Commission. Beginning 1st June the advances to the Belgian Government are to be made by the United States.

As a result of the spread of destitution, the rapid extension of special relief measures and the increasing preponderance of governmental subsidies in the Commission's income, it has been necessary to establish a sharp division between those measures undertaken with public subscriptions and those undertaken with government assistance. The soup kitchen, free bread tickets, feeding of children, clothing and shelter for the destitute and homeless, were the instinctive and first-applied measures of relief. These were established with the public gifts and have been continued on this basis throughout the period covered by this report. The new measures, many of them in the nature of state service which affords economic and financial rather than benevolent relief, have been carried out with government subsidies.

The various committees set up to execute detailed relief may, therefore, receive resources from two fundamentally different funds.

Services maintained by public charity.—The following represent the services initiated or maintained in the past by public charity from abroad:

a) Public Provisioning (the bread lines, canteens, etc.), administered by the Communal Committees.

b) Clothing of the destitute—distribution effected through the Communal Committees.

c) Provision of temporary shelters—administered through the Communal Committees.

d) Special Committees as follows:

Assistance to Children
Assistance to Lace-Workers
Assistance to Refugees
Assistance to Foreigners
Assistance to Artists
Assistance to Doctors and Pharmacists
Assistance to Destitute Young Mothers
Assistance to Belgian Prisoners of War
Assistance to War Cripples
Assistance to Dispossessed
Assistance to Antwerp Workrooms
League for Prevention of Tuberculosis
Restoration of Churches
Cardinal Mercier's Clergymen's Fund
And some twenty others

State aid.—The services maintained by government subsidy are:

a) Allowance to families whose breadwinners have been lost owing to the war

b) Supplementary allowances to the destitute

c) Advances to Bureau of families of officers and non-commissioned officers

d) Advances to the Société coopérative d'Advances et de Prêts (Loan Society)

e) Assistance to the Communal via the Provincial Governments

f) Advances to the Caisse d'Epargne (Savings Bank)
g) Advances to the Auxiliaire des Sociétés d'Habitations ouvrières (Building and Loan Societies)
h) Advances to the Bureau de Bienfaisance
i) Advances to the Educational Institutions
j) Assistance (in part) for children and for war orphans

PUBLIC CHARITY DISTRIBUTION THROUGH COMMUNAL CHARITY COMMITTEES

Public provisioning and general assistance ("Bread Line Division").—This comprehensive branch of charity distribution is the outcome of the initial emergency effort made at the inception of relief organizations. It now consists, in the main, of the support given the canteen-system of bread and soup distribution. Bread and soup are alone insufficient to maintain life over a prolonged period and must be supplemented by other articles, so that other resources are presupposed. From time to time, however, with the growth of destitution, special classes or divisions of the population have had to be differentiated from the general mass and provided with supplemental support. Some departments even render their clientele independent of the bread line, but most of them simply supplement it. The bread line therefore is, as a rule, necessary as a foundation, even for the differentiated groups: there is always a class to be fed that does not fall within such special provisions and that has to be cared for in respect of its extra necessities by the communal committees. The principal expenditure under this heading, however, arises out of the support of the public canteens now established in all congested areas. These enterprises were started at the outbreak of war, partially by the communes and municipalities themselves and partially by private effort. They have been added to in numbers by the Communal Charity Committees, all being now, to some extent, financially assisted through this division.

The supplies for the canteens comprise in part overseas imports of the Commission for Relief in Belgium purchased from the Communal Provisioning Committees, and in part native supplies purchased in the open market, the canteen managers standing in relation to the Provisioning Department precisely as would any other customer. The canteens must not be confused with the stores conducted by the Communal Provisioning Committees, as they are absolutely separate establishments. The former provide the method of furnishing public meals for the more needy class of the population. The latter furnish food (in an unprepared state) to all classes, according to their relative necessity.

All canteen relief is issued upon tickets distributed by the Communal Charity Committees. The cost of these tickets is borne generally in one of the two following ways: (*a*) by the recipient out of his personal resources, or (*b*) by the recipient out of the charity allowance made to him in part by the Committee, in part by the communal authorities.

The participation of the communal authorities in the cost of the ration is the essential condition to which the Committee subordinates

its intervention. This principle has been adopted with the object of avoiding an unnecessary increase in the number of rations and of interesting the communes in the observance of the conditions imposed by the central organization. In Brussels, for instance, the various communes of the Agglomération are divided into a number of Provisioning Committees, each having its canteen. At the head of each canteen area is the Communal Committee, or a subcommittee drawn from the inhabitants of the quarter. These committees are seconded in their task by devoted women who attend to the distribution of rations with admirable tact and solicitude. Nearly 400,000 rations are distributed daily in the Agglomération. The ration consists of a pint of soup and the standard ration of 330 grammes of brown whole wheat bread. In addition, a second issue of soup may be served at night if the organization of the canteen permits. When this second issue of soup is not provided there is (or at least was until the recent shortage of imported foodstuffs in Belgium)[11] an equivalent distribution of foodstuffs which can be prepared at home, such as rice, peas, beans, bacon, and lard, or of tickets which can be issued against the foodstuffs procurable from the tradespeople of the commune, or the warehouses of the Communal Provisioning Committee.

The average cost of the soup at the canteens throughout Belgium is 20 centimes the quart, or 10 centimes for the regular pint ration. In those places where the daily bread ration is served at the same time as the soup, the former costs an additional 15 centimes, making a total of 25 centimes per day. Under the present arrangement the communal authorities in most Belgian towns and villages do not intervene directly in making their part of the payment for the soup furnished the needy population. Their financial help is more often given as a subsidy to the Communal Charity Committee, which in turn, after selecting those worthy of assistance, distributes the soup tickets.

The feeding of the children in Belgium is a great special work aside from that of the "general canteens," and one of equal importance. Children's canteens are now established universally throughout the country. This particular subject will be dealt with more fully a little farther on.

In some centers "economic" restaurants have been established by the communal committees or by benevolent groups for the middle classes of straitened means. Good meals are served at from 15 to 25 centimes, a portion of the operating cost being borne by the communal authorities or the communal committees and some initial expense directly by the central organization.

The funds allotted to this department are also used to supplement the bread line ration where other funds do not intervene or are insufficient; for instance, where unemployed casual laborers, seamstresses, charwomen, clerks, messengers, etc., are excluded from the section devoted to skilled unemployed and must have supplemental income if they are wholly destitute of resources.

[11] Importations by the Commission were distressingly small in the early part of 1917, due to the submarine campaign. See chapter v.

The original function of the canteens was to supply a meager ration of bread and soup, supplemental to the remaining individual resources. With the lapse of time four conditions developed, by reason of which the canteen system required reinforcement: (*a*) the excessive growth of the number of destitute; (*b*) the complete exhaustion of all resources of a large proportion of the necessitous, owing to long unemployment, especially in the skilled trades; (*c*) the decreasing local resources of the communal committees; (*d*) the inadequacy of the canteen food to support life properly. To meet the growing exhaustion of individual resources, various articles were gradually added to the canteen supplies, such as potatoes, coffee, soup, lard, peas, beans, rice, etc. This expansion of necessary commodities and of numbers dependent threatened to disorganize the canteen system by overwork and, furthermore, to displace much small commerce which it was highly desirable to preserve. Potatoes, salt, sugar, soap, fuel, etc., being, in the main, drawn from the country itself, their distribution by the canteens not only entailed an uncalled-for overtaxing of their abilities but also a dislocation of economic machinery. In consequence, other branches of relief were developed to relieve pressure upon the soup-kitchens and to provide supplemental resources to certain classes. The number of people served at the canteens during 1916, therefore, remained about stationary, and the "Soupes" underwent no further development in this period. The extremely difficult winter of 1916–17 and the past spring, however, have given an enormous impetus to the "Soupes." During a pinch such as Belgium has suffered since the declaration of the German blockade, the C.R.B. and Comité National in Belgium wished to use their limited food stocks in giving the maximum aid to the poor. This was done in cutting down the food rations of the generality of the population to a very low point, so as to conserve a large part of the food stocks for the canteens. In order to avail themselves of this benefit, over 2,000,000 people were taking their daily soup ration in April 1917. The "Soupe Populaire" has well proved its utility, particularly in this last critical period, as an inestimable boon to the industrial and heavily populated regions, such as Liège, Antwerp, Brussels, Charleroi, and Mons, where upward of 35 per cent of the inhabitants go to the canteens.

Theory of the "People's Canteen."—The "Soupe Populaire" as a means of relief for the poor has shown itself such an efficient institution that it will be of value to take a passing glance at the objects which the Commission and the Comité National have had in mind in favoring its promotion. In a country where the amount of foodstuff, native and imported, is fixed, and where these foodstuffs are not sufficient comfortably to feed the entire population, the poor are bound to suffer from the economic result. The principle is this: the wealthier class by their demand force food prices to a point outside the reach of the man of limited means. It is extremely difficult (and in the case of Belgium under German rule, impossible) to lay hands on all foodstuffs within the country, and report on these at fixed prices to all inhabitants on the same basis. The Government can control, however, the employment of imported foods in such a way as specially to help the poor who cannot buy their share of

high-priced native food products. This is what the Commission, with its imported food monopoly, has done in Belgium.

The great problem which arises in making this distinction between the needy and the well off is not easy of solution. There are many shades of need between the two extremes. Furthermore, to examine individually the status of every person in a country of 7,000,000, and to accord the same relative treatment throughout the country, is practically impossible. The "Soupe Populaire" has solved this question in automatically separating the population into two great divisions, those who do and do not go to the canteens. The farmer, the man of means, the town man with a small garden; in fact, all those who still have some resources or provision, do not go to the "Soupes." It is the poor man, the laborer, and oftentimes the man of the middle class whose economies have been exhausted by the long drain of the war, who frequent the canteen.

In the Province of Hainaut, for instance, the first division includes 700,000 people, the second 400,000, who take home their daily cooked rations from the canteens. The Provincial Committee therefore focuses its aid as far as possible on the needy 400,000. This division benefits not only in receiving its pint of soup each day at the canteen, but the fact that its members indicate their need in being obliged to go to the canteen has led the Committee to accord these people certain supplementary rations of uncooked food. In April 1917, for example, those of the first division received the general monthly ration of 400 grams of rice, peas, and beans, and 400 grams of bacon and lard. Those of the second division received: (1) the general ration of 400 grams of rice, peas, beans, and 400 grams of lard and bacon; (2) a special supplementary ration of the same size; and (3) the 1,200 grams of peas, beans, rice, and 400 grams of bacon and lard used in preparing the soup during the course of a month.

Those of the second division, therefore, received five times as much in rice, peas, beans, and three times as much in bacon and lard as the first division. Bread, which is entirely controlled by the Relief Commission and which is lacking to all alike, is rationed equally to everyone. In certain places, as at Brussels, however, a small supplement taken at the expense of the mass of the population is allowed for those who go to the canteens.

Last of all, the Commission, foreseeing the difficult situation of Belgium, whose native resources of foodstuffs were fast approaching exhaustion, planned to put into effect a scale of very substantial supplementary uncooked rations (rice, peas, beans, herrings, coffee, bacon, lard) for the clientele of the canteens. The system was just under way when the German blockade was declared, and in order to conserve stocks within the country it unfortunately had to be abandoned in large part. These rations were to have been forwarded free to the poor, or against a light payment to those who had some small resources, the losses thus incurred to be borne by the Commission's Provisioning Department, fortified by subsidies from the Belgian Government. The expenditure in this division up to 31st October 1915, was $24,552,426.53.

Clothing department.—Obviously the working and lower classes

possess in no community much reserve of clothing, and the suspension of income must, sooner or later, reduce them to the position of being underclad and their health being thereby seriously endangered. Moreover, newborn babies and young children require a start in life's affairs and frequent renewals. A central clothing establishment was therefore set up in Brussels at the initiation of relief measures, and similar, though less extensive, establishments have been created in the leading provincial centers, and all the clothing from these is issued free of charge. The sources of clothing to the central establishment have been of four orders:

1. Local gifts from individuals and institutions throughout Belgium
2. Gifts in kind, from abroad, either made clothing or materials
3. Purchase of local material and its manufacture on behalf of the central establishment
4. Purchase and importation of cloth and material abroad, which is made up into garments by the workshops in Belgium

Belgium in normal times imports the great bulk of its textile materials, and as there have been no imports since the invasion, with the lapse of time the supplies obtainable from the first two sources have gradually diminished until the establishment has become practically entirely dependent upon gifts from abroad or purchases by the Commission for Relief in Belgium. The great importance of the operations conducted by the central establishment may be appreciated by the fact that to the end of January 1917, a total of 9,123,874 garments had been distributed.[12] The made-up new clothing was sent directly to the central warehouse for classification. All secondhand clothing is sent to a repairs department, where the articles are disinfected, overhauled, washed, remade, and generally placed in a serviceable condition. This department employs a large number of workpeople at a sufficient wage to enable them to live. The new material is collected in a central workroom where garments are sent and assembled in packages containing all the necessary adjuncts for making up, and these packages are delivered to sewing women throughout the cities, payment for their labor being made against return of completed articles. Furthermore, considerable quantities of material have been handed for completion to various mutual trade associations in order that skilled workpeople, i.e., tailors, boot- and hat-makers, etc., could be given controlled employment, which would provide them with subsistence. Altogether an average of upward of 20,000 people are employed by the central establishment in Brussels alone. Similar establishments, on a smaller scale, exist in certain other large cities, and are, in the main, supported by local charity and provisioning committees, but receive some cash help from the central organization. Moreover, material and clothing are supplied to them by the central establish-

[12] The central establishment had distributed 18,900,000 garments for men, women, and children by the end of 1918. See *Annuaire Statistique de la Belgique et du Congo Belge 1915–19.* In 1919 the Commission imported over 9,000 tons of used clothing into Belgium. See chapter xv.

ment. Distribution of all clothing is carried out through the communal committees, these committees being required to send to the central establishment (through their provincial committees) an indent showing the precise garments needed and the name and condition of the individual for whom they are intended. The clothing is then selected in the central warehouse, made into special packages, and dispatched to the commune concerned. This arrangement has avoided the necessity of carrying any clothing stocks in the communes, and has been found efficacious and economical. One result is that it is possible for the Central Clothing Establishment to state exactly the individual to whom any garment passing through the hands of the central establishment has been delivered.

One branch of peculiar solicitude has been the provision for newborn babies. For this purpose special packages are prepared containing the entire equipment for the first year of the new arrival's life, and every destitute mother in Belgium is entitled to this service. The children generally are the objects of solicitous attention, for their power of resistance if underclad is much below that of adults.

The total expenditure of the central establishment to 31st March 1917, was $9,625,431.21. This does not, of course, include the value of all the clothing distributed to the destitute throughout Belgium, since it covers only the operations of the Central Clothing Establishment. The large cities and towns in Belgium all contain their own workrooms, and it is probable that it will be found, when time can be applied to the study of the matter, that the operations of these subsidiary establishments have also been on a very considerable scale.

Temporary shelter.—The widespread home destruction during the invasion produced a large body of homeless classes, the poorer members of which, owing to the economic stagnation, have been unable to make any effort toward home restoration. The result has been that considerable numbers were initially forced into open fields or cow-sheds, or overcrowded in the remainder of the undestroyed villages or the larger centers. Therefore, one of the earliest activities of the Communal Charity Committees in those localities where destruction has been considerable was the provision of some temporary shelter. The communal committees, as usual, have been allowed a great deal of autonomy in the methods by which they accomplish the end. In certain provinces the committees have supplied tarred felt, glass, and other temporary building materials, have stimulated the repair of buildings the ruins of which could be utilized with the least construction, etc. Advances in the shape of loans have been made to householders with which to engage labor and, in certain districts, rows of barracks, etc., have been erected. Subventions made from the Relief Organization have amounted to $539,419.30 although as in other features of relief this does not represent the total expenditure, but only the addition of the Relief Organization to the funds recruited from all sources by the communal, regional, or provincial committees or local municipal authorities, it being at present impossible to determine the grand totals expended.

PUBLIC CHARITY DISTRIBUTION THROUGH SPECIAL COMMITTEES[13]

As relief necessities have developed, it has been found of crucial importance not only that the established pre-war institutions be supported but also that special organizations be created to deal with specific problems. Many organizations have sprung up through individual and mutual effort among the Belgians since the outbreak of war, and many have been initiated by the central administration, all intent upon the solution of particular and special difficulties that have arisen. As before stated, it has been the policy of the central administration at all times to support all worthy, well-conducted efforts of the kind, and subventions have been used as a means to maintain efficient administration and prevent overlapping of their manifold activities. There is no particular uniformity of organization or method in these special arrangements. Some of the committees have been set up simply for the purpose of securing effective co-ordination among already existing organizations in a position to deal with the problems arising. Others have been set up directly to effect the object aimed at; for instance, the financial relief of special classes and professions, as a consequence of which the individuals concerned have been considerately removed from direct dependence on the communal and other distribution agencies. The problem in Belgium is the practical one of maintaining the population in life and health during a sustained emergency. This can be accomplished only by utilizing, in large measure, the volunteer services of thousands of self-denying citizens, and in such circumstances rigid systematization and exacting discipline is not permissible. All the special committees recruit support from public benevolence in Belgium, and practically all have some income outside the subventions of the Relief Organization. Some committees have independent income from foreign sources, although specialized appeals abroad have been strongly discouraged by the Commission as tending to confuse and minimize its more vitally important campaign of balanced and orderly solicitation as well as to interfere with its authoritative position in Belgium. The following paragraphs treat of the principal special committees and pre-war institutions which have received subventions from public subscriptions.

Children.—From the start, the children have been the object of universal solicitude and have received care and sustenance through a multitude of organizations, embracing not only the communal and special committees of the Relief Organization, but also the many already established children's institutions of the country. In order better to co-ordinate all effort and to insure that the entire field would be effectually covered, a special committee was organized in February 1915, devoted to child problems exclusively, under the title of "Aide et Protection Aux Œuvres de l'Enfance." The object of this section is not so much to intervene directly in special cases as to control, stimulate, and assist the multitude of existing institu-

[13] The part played by the Belgian women in the distribution of charity is described by Mrs. Charlotte Kellogg in *Women of Belgium.*

tions organized in Belgium on behalf of the children. In July 1916, the feeding of children was placed in the hands of another committee.

Belgium has approximately 2,250,000 children under 16 years of age, of whom, in round numbers, 600,000 belong to poor families. In normal times the majority of these children are maintained by their parents, although even then a considerable proportion are dependent upon charity. As a result of the war, the proportion of children dependent upon charity has, directly or indirectly, greatly increased.

There are, throughout the whole of Belgium, more than 600 orphanages, caring for from 50 to 400 charges each, or a total of over 135,000 children, even in normal times. Due directly to war causes, some 11,000 additional orphans have been brought into being, and through family disorganization a further 20,000 absolutely homeless children have been turned adrift. There are thus not only the pre-war orphans to be cared for, but also a very serious accretion of war orphans to be dealt with.

The Belgians have felt strongly not only that these children were their own particular charge, but that they should be preserved to Belgium; therefore they have consistently discouraged all suggestions to take them abroad, no matter how tender and attractive have been the many proposals made.

The pre-war public institutions, supported in normal times by subsidies from public authorities, by gifts and by revenue from charitable foundations, have found themselves with reduced incomes in face of much enlarged demands, and have, needless to say, received most sympathetic help from the Relief Organization. But since the pre-war institutions were overtaxed, the orphans and homeless children due to war causes have called for special care, and it has been necessary to make special provisions in their behalf. The reduction or total loss of income among the poorer social strata has borne hardly upon the children, and, therefore, measures have had to be taken to guarantee proper sustenance and care for many children still in charge of their parents.

Thus the assistance to children has taken two principal directions:

a) The direct feeding of the children of the poor through special canteens under special committees, through arrangements made by the communal committees, or through the schools, supplemented generally by medical superintendence, advice to mothers, etc.

b) The support of institutions for orphans and the homeless.

At the outbreak of the war several institutions were already in the field, including "Les Petites Abeilles," "Goutte de Lait," "Abri Maternel," "Institut pour Consultations aux Nourrissons," and others. All have expanded their efforts to meet new emergencies. The following three institutions are the main agencies for the care and relief of children:

1. The Children's Canteen, known as the "Soupe Scolaire."
2. Canteens for weakly children ("Enfants Débiles").
3. Baby Canteens ("Goutte de Lait") for the infants of the poor.

The school-children's canteen (Soupe Scolaire) is organized throughout the country for boys and girls from three to fourteen. Practically every school in Belgium is now associated with a children's canteen, the school buildings themselves often being used as the serving stations. The children (in contrast to the method of the "Soupe Scolaire," where the soup is taken home) eat their meal at the canteen. The diet is more substantial generally than that of the Soupe Scolaire, consisting of soup with a slice of bread, often followed by rice, potatoes, or some other vegetable dish. Inasmuch as children can benefit both from General and School Canteens, it will be seen that sound measures have been taken for the protection of juvenile health. At the present time half a million children attend the School Canteens. The expense of the meal given is borne in part by the central organization of the Comité National and partly by local subscription. The former allows a subsidy of eight centimes per ration, provided that at least four centimes is raised locally. The cost of the children's meal runs about 20 centimes, and is furnished entirely free to all the children of the poor.

For weakly children (*enfants débiles*) special canteens have been established. Here a nourishing and general diet consisting of such native rarities as meat, eggs, and milk is provided.

Infants under three years are taken care of by the Local Committee of the "Goutte de Lait" ("Drop of Milk"), which exists in practically every important town and village. Babies of poor mothers are furnished with fresh, pure milk daily free of charge. In these canteens parents are required to bring their children for periodical medical inspection, in order that the food may be prepared suitable to the different stages of the babies' progress. This organization, one of the most useful and important in Belgium, receives heavy subsidies from the Comité National. With the "Goutte de Lait" is also associated the work of aiding mothers without means. Pregnant mothers and those nursing babies are the object of special attention, and receive without charge a wholesome, sustaining food diet.

Of all the work carried on in Belgium, that for the children is perhaps the most interesting. If any one of the thousands of donors throughout the world who so generously gave to the special fund last year for School Canteens could have had the opportunity to take a glance at one of the canteens in operation, he would have known his gift many times requited. On the closing of school at 4 o'clock, the small boys and girls form in line and march to the nearest canteen (as in one of the six canteens at Tournai, for instance). In one end of the room the 200 little girls take their places at long tables; an equal number of boys jubilantly make a rush for their places at the other end. Each table is decked with an American flag. The flags of the Allies cover the walls of the room. In one corner two industrious, good-natured cooks are stirring immense cauldrons of soup and rice, each holding 400 quarts, or enough for two shifts of children of 400 each. Young lady volunteers(there are thousands of them engaged in every sort of charitable work in Belgium), gowned in white, at a given signal, when the children are all ready, start busily serving the soup. There is no limit placed on the quantity—one, two, or three bowls, according to the appetite of the

partaker, as this in many cases is the only "square meal" the children have during the day. Then follows the rice, and exceptionally on this one day, there is brown sugar to go with it. From the welcome shout that goes up, it is evident that sugar in Belgium, as elsewhere, is a much appreciated rarity. At the end of half an hour, 400 little girls and boys troop out and go to their own homes, where in many cases the kitchen larder is practically empty. A twopence or four cents given by some thoughtful person in England or America, however, has provided, for all, the meal which will keep them strong and safeguard their health in supplementing the scant home diet.

The war orphans and the children rendered homeless through family disorganization consequent on the war have been provided for in a multitude of ways. Aside from direct subsidies to established orphanages and indirect aid to orphans through the Bureaux de Bienfaisance, the Communal Charity Committees have made allowances to families which take in and provide for such children, the established orphanages have been assisted to extend the number of their charges, etc., until the war orphans and other homeless children have been temporarily settled in some manner. Clothing has had to be provided for the newly-born and for the destitute, and for this purpose special arrangements, already mentioned, exist in the Central Clothing Establishment.

Up to the 31st March, 1917, the total subsidies of the organizations engaged in the relief and feeding of children were $2,541,183.59. This represents but a tithe of the total expenditure on children, for not only do other branches of the Commission care for children, but even their subsidies do not include the very large expenditure through the various agencies of this nature with which this general committee co-operates. Altogether, the work of the Belgian people on behalf of the children is so notable as to provide constant stimulation to the whole Relief Organization.

The Section Agricole.—So great was the pressure upon the provincial provisioning committees in distributing the necessities of life to the population, that there was danger, during the early months of the work, that the provision of fodder for all forms of live stock would be neglected, which would result not only in immediate suffering to the beasts themselves, but would ultimately jeopardize an important source of food for the people. There was therefore organized an agricultural section, composed of agricultural representatives and specialists from the various sections of the country, whose duty it was to control and distribute the large quantities of imported maize and its by-products to the farming population and owners of horses in the cities. As the provincial committees became organized, they took over this function from the Section Agricole, which, however, continued to advise the Relief Organization in all agricultural matters, and formed the nucleus of the Special Crop Committee when the central organization took over the native harvests of cereals in 1915, as also in 1916.

Up to the 31st March, 1917, there had been allotted to this section $333,198.81, chiefly for the purchase of seed and fodder for destitute peasants and for the reconstruction of farms and villages.

Lace-workers.—The economic paralysis following invasion was bound to hurt first the industries of luxury, and its disastrous effects made themselves soonest felt in the places where these industries constitute the principal activity, as in the lace-making districts.

This industry was taken in hand by two principal committees of Belgian women, the Union Patriotique des Femmes Belges and the Comité de la Dentelle, which set to work to organize the distribution of work to lace-makers. The Comité de la Dentelle especially looks after "real" lace, while the Union Patriotique des Femmes Belges takes care of "lacet" and imitation work. This industry, in that it requires a minimum of raw materials (which have been imported by the Commission for Relief in Belgium), lends itself to a system of deferred self-support, in accordance with which the lace committees, with the assistance of the Relief Organization, have arranged systematic advances to the lace-workers against their production.

Some lace has been exported, but in the main it is held for realization after the war; therefore, although the support of the workers requires a considerable present investment, it should be largely recoverable. The funds which otherwise would have been required to support these workers in unemployment are thus diverted to this end and on much the same allowances. By the extension of this system some 40,000 lace-workers, who formerly figured in the lists of unemployed, have been made self-supporting, and upon realization of the lace some further remuneration to the workers may be available.

Subcommittees have been constituted in the following lace centers: — Alost, Antwerp, Audernarde, Beernem, Bruges, Courtrai, Eecloo, Gand, Herzele, Grammont, Lokeren, Louvain, Malines, Marche, Namur, Ninove, Saint-Nicolas, Sotteghem, Termonde, Thielt, and Turnhout. These subcommittees have the duty of grouping under their direction the lace-workers over sixteen years of age—unemployed and necessitous—living in their area, and of serving as intermediaries between the factories and the workwomen to see that the latter receive at least each week the minimum allocation of three francs in exchange for thirty hours of work.

The control committees are comprised of persons perfectly acquainted with the lace industry, and among their functions is the control of patterns manufactured. Thus, while accomplishing a work of unification, the committees contribute to the amelioration of the national art of lace-making by supervising the choice of patterns and the perfection of the execution. The Comité de la Dentelle and the Union Patriotique des Femmes Belges also serve as central committees for the reception of lace and for perfecting the technical part of the organization.

Assistance has also been granted to enable the reopening of lace schools in a number of localities throughout Flanders and the province of Brabant. The laces manufactured in the apprentice schools remain the property of the Relief Organization. They represent a commercial value greater than the salaries paid.

Much lace has been exported by the Commission for Relief in Belgium. Consignments for sale, representing a value of over 3,000,000 francs, have been made up to the 31st March, 1917, to England and the United States.

The sum placed at the disposal of the lace committees up to the 31st March, 1917, less realization on sales was $322,692.59.

Assistance to refugees.—The displacement of population resulting from invasion created a large number of internal refugees. Generally speaking, these persons have now settled down in one place or another or have fallen under various branches of relief. At first they were largely cared for by the communal authorities and the relief canteens, but in order to relieve the overtaxed resources of these organizations and to obtain a more permanent solution the above committee was formed. It has for its chief objects: (*a*) to determine the best solution for special refugee problems; (*b*) to give temporary assistance when necessary; (*c*) to secure local shelter for those not provided for otherwise.

The refugees are mainly cared for out of other funds, the function of the committee being to secure their proper classification and substantiate their right to such funds. A number of refugees have been settled in various parts of the country and twenty general shelters have been erected. Some of these establishments are for special purposes, such as maternity homes.

The total subventions of the Relief Organization to this committee amount to $480,777.44.

Refugees from Northern France.—In addition to the internal refugees mentioned above (persons obliged to go in search of shelter from one part of Belgium to another), the Commission has had to face a new problem this spring in the handling of French refugees. The German retreat in March caused the evacuation of great numbers (125,000 up to May 1st) of civilians from France into Belgium. The refugees are quartered by the Belgians in their homes, and receive their food from the local C.R.B. Provisioning Store. Unfortunately, the German authorities have placed them in large part in industrial regions, such as Charleroi and Mons, where native products of the soil are very rare. This has not only aggravated the difficult situation of the poorer Belgians in forcing up the price of native foodstuffs, but has also rendered more complicated the problem of relieving the French.

The refugees from France arrived with little notice. During the first weeks, and pending a definite arrangement, the Belgian Committees were furnished free food to give the French. All Belgian institutions, such as the canteens, medical assistance, etc., have been extended to them. An arrangement has now been concluded whereby the refugees are to receive the same charity allowance in Belgium as they formerly did in France, this assistance to be furnished out of the French funds of the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

Assistance to destitute foreigners.—There were a large number of foreigners residing in Belgium at the outbreak of war, who participated in the general distress due to economic stagnation. Moreover, the internment of resident breadwinners of belligerent nationalities resulted in difficulty in many families. A committee was organized to look after these people without regard to nationality. This committee procures them tickets on the canteens, makes advances in the way of loans, and resorts to other methods of support.

Special subcommittees have been organized to take care of French, Russian, and British subjects, including in their membership persons of these nationalities, and finding support partly in public charity and partly through subventions from the Relief Organization. The total advances to the 31st March, 1917, amount to $510,991.47.

Assistance to doctors and pharmacists.—This very active committee, "Secours aux Médecins et Pharmaciens Belges Sinistrés," was founded in January 1915, to accord assistance to doctors and pharmacists who have suffered during the war. It maintains branches in each of the provinces.

A peculiar hardship to doctors and pharmacists lies in the fact that the destitution of the people prevents them from making current payments for medical service, and the doctors must therefore be otherwise maintained in order that the population in general may be cared for. This committee has opened relations, through the Commission for Relief in Belgium, with the British Fund for Belgian Physicians and with the American Fund for Belgian Physicians. These two foreign organizations have contributed largely not only in funds but in medical supplies, instruments, and alimentary products for the sick. The better-to-do doctors and other members of the Belgian community have also contributed largely to this committee, and the actual subventions given by the Relief Organization, $442,-636.06, have formed but a part of its resources.

Assistance to artists.—This section of the community, as with all professions dependent upon luxury, has been peculiarly hard hit by the war. A committee was organized in January 1915, with a special mission to take care of necessitous members. A definite system of monthly assistance was established on the basis of 30 francs per month to married men with families, 20 francs to married men without families, and 15 francs to bachelors. These allowances take the form of loans, and upward of 3,000 artists and families of artists have been helped. The total subvention from the Relief Organization to the end of October amounts to $312,638.54.

Assistance to the dispossessed.—A committee was originally organized by the Brussels bar for the legal protection of families rendered homeless by failure to meet their rent engagements. It has now embraced a wider field, and interests itself not only in legal protection, but in obtaining concessions from landlords, credit, reductions in rent, exemption from taxes, rates, and lighting, as well as numerous other concessions, especially for the middle-class destitute. In the first year alone of its work over 12,000 cases were examined, a large number of concessions secured, and actual shelter provided for many who would otherwise have suffered. This committee, like all others, has its own resources from public charity, but subventions have been added by the Relief Organization amounting to $108,626.42.

Assistance to Belgian soldier and civilian prisoners of war.—This Committee has undertaken to secure information and transmit brief correspondence to and from prisoners of war and civilians interned abroad and to remit money and parcels to such prisoners. Upward of thirty branches have been established throughout the country and

have been recognized by the German General Government. Something over 1,300,000 requests for information have been received, and 60,000 small remittances and over 800,000 parcels have been transmitted. Subventions have been given to this organization as well as to three other committees engaged in somewhat similar work in connection with Belgian prisoners, the total to all these committees being $75,358.41.

Belgian National League against Tuberculosis.—This old established institution has numerous dispensaries and open-air cure institutions throughout the country. Owing to the stagnation produced by the war it has been greatly in need of assistance to carry on its beneficent work. Furthermore, the demand for its services has greatly increased because of the extension of tuberculosis in Belgium, particularly during the past year. A network of dispensaries is in operation throughout the country. All persons examined at these dispensaries, and showing symptoms of the disease, are provided with special cards which permit them to have important supplementary rations of food at the Provisioning Committee Stores.

Great care is taken to protect children from contracting tuberculosis. Those of poor families where parents are stricken are placed in "homes," where they may receive good care and live under healthy conditions. Subventions to the amount of $304,079.72 have been given to this organization.

Restoration of damaged churches.—A committee was formed in December 1914, with the object of providing damaged churches with sufficient equipment to carry on public worship. Subventions to the amount of $40,212.49 have been given.

Fuel relief.—The winter 1916–17 was the coldest and most protracted known in Belgium for twenty-five years. The consequent suffering among the poor because of the scarcity and high price of coal was great. In order to alleviate this situation to a certain extent the central organization furnished funds to its subcommittees for the purpose of providing all poor families (who were going to the canteens) with 100 k. of coal per household and per month. The money furnished out of relief funds for this purpose amounted to $475,978.19.

Free supplementary rations.—As a part of the programme dealing with the giving of supplementary rations to those who frequent the "Soupe Populaire," the sum of $404,613.03 has been paid out of relief funds up to the present time for this purpose.

Distribution to Belgians outside the occupation area.—A certain amount of clothing has been set aside from time to time for distribution to Belgian refugees in Holland, in France, and the unoccupied portion of Belgium. Some provisions, chiefly flour and condensed milk, have from time to time been contributed to the destitute Belgian civilian population outside the occupation area. The total value of these gifts—clothing and provisions—is estimated at $1,304,462.92.

Sundry subventions.—Subventions have been granted to a number of other committees and institutions to assist them in their work at one time or another. They embrace Cardinal Mercier's Fund for Distressed Clergymen, $76,774.20; the Economic Restaurants, which

have already been mentioned, $96,236.22; clothing workrooms for the destitute in the city of Antwerp, $248,228.35; a committee formed to assist destitute young mothers, $12,984.26; gifts of foodstuffs given directly to certain municipalities by the donors, which have been carried through the relief books and appear among the receipts and *pro et contra* among gifts, amounting to $57,172.06; financial aid, $126,045.09; assistance to wives of officers and non-commissioned officers, $61,675.20; also other minor subventions for various purposes to over twenty-five different organizations, amounting to $130,129.87.

RELIEF AND FINANCIAL MEASURES CONDUCTED WITH BELGIAN GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES

Economic and financial relief measures, as well as charity, made possible by government subsidies are conducted through the Communal Charity Committees under the following groups:

Families deprived of their breadwinners by the war.—Among the numerous classes of the Belgian population to whom differentiated assistance is now extended are those families which the war has deprived of their breadwinners. This amounts practically to the war separation allowance paid by European Governments generally, although the field covered is, for benevolent reasons, widened to cover rather broader ground than is usual in such measures. The process of selection of these families was not a matter of extraordinary difficulty: the lists of those who had joined the colors, or who had fallen in the invasion, or had become mutilated or wounded, were obtainable. A general difficulty, common to all classes, lay in assigning the amount of assistance to be extended, in view of the number of cases, the general condition of living, and the disposable funds. For instance, one difficulty lay in determining the allowance to be made in view of the various kinds of families to be assisted. Several categories of these were determined, as illustrative of which and of the allowances made, the following examples are probably sufficient: In the case of a family consisting of wife and children, the wife gets 75 centimes per diem and each child 25 centimes; if the soldier is a widower or divorcé with children, the custodian of the children gets 50 centimes per diem for each child. In the case of illegitimate children recognized by the father, the custodian gets 50 centimes a day for each child up to the third, the third and succeeding children being allowed 25 centimes.

The distribution of this form of assistance is the easiest of the six great sections of communal charity, for several reasons. As stated above, the lists of those entitled to the allowance were made up without great difficulty. Furthermore the lists were fairly permanent, not undergoing the weekly changes of the other sections.

The average number of persons receiving relief in various provinces on the 31st March, 1917, was 3,032,089 individuals, and the total expenditure to this date was $37,429,862.45.

Supplementary allowances to destitute.—The large proportion of destitution due to unemployment, and the insufficiency of the Committee's imported food ration, including canteen food, led to the

organization of a special effort to deal directly with this problem. Moreover, the ease with which the position of workers could be determined, through employers and trade-unions, pointed them out for special selection and separate organization. Prior to the creation of this special division such persons were dependent upon the public canteens and, as pointed out above, their shrinking resources either required expansion of the canteen activities, or, alternately, the provision of supplemental or substituted support.

To give a definite meaning to the term "unemployment," and to adapt this meaning to such a scale as is necessary in distributing aid and assistance to a nation at large, are matters of very great complication and difficulty. Questions arise as to the distinction of partial from total unemployment, and even as to the constitution of unemployment itself; for instance, is a man who is not earning wages, but spending his time working in his garden, to be classed as unemployed? It was, however, a condition, and not an economic theory, with which Belgium had to do, and the solution of the problem was, necessarily, wholly practical. In the first place, it was determined that the term, "unemployed," was to be limited to workmen, artisans, or employees in trades, industries, and public utilities; that is, practically skilled workers, a class whose normal positions are more or less fixed in large industries, and whose individual condition is easily determinable through employers and trade-unions. Excluded from this class, consequently, were agricultural laborers, domestic servants or domiciliary workers, such as washerwomen or seamstresses, and, of course, employers of all kinds, large or small, whether tenants or proprietors. All of these and many other unattached classes, such as pedlars, and messengers of the body economic, together with the representatives of the learned or artistic professions, were assisted when necessary either from the general assistance fund, or from special committees created to deal with particular problems.

Excluded absolutely from assistance are workmen owning house dogs (*chiens de luxe*), or ten carrier pigeons, or fighting-cocks; workmen, any members of whose families frequent archery matches or places of amusement like cinematographs; workmen who gamble or drink to excess, or refuse to work according to the extent of their powers. The workman out of employment who maintains a cabaret is also excluded. The basis of this *Index Expurgatorius*, most of which has now ceased to have reason for existence, is perhaps more moral than economic, though the possession of carrier pigeons and the frequenting of archery contests would hardly seem to be demoralizing practices. The list, however, indicates some of the economic and moral problems of Belgium. A big dog would eat as much as a small child, and a large idle dog is, therefore, a luxury in Belgium today, but the big working dog is a necessity for the poor classes in Belgium, as, for example, for the delivery of milk. The matching of carrier pigeons, and the betting on them, had run to extreme heights in Belgium, and the betting on cock-fights and archery contests had also become excessive.

The edict against the sale of spirituous drinks affected a large number of the population, for in Belgium the number of drinking

places is greater than in any civilized country of the world—one for every thirty-five inhabitants approximately. On the other hand, the Belgian *estaminet* is in no way to be confused with the American saloon. It is generally only a room set aside for the serving of beer and coffee in homes situated along well-traveled roads. It is rarely a "haunt of vice," but rather a resting-place or sociable meeting center for friends within the community. The profits of many of these places are extremely small, frequently not more than five or six francs a week. In many cases they represent the effort of a hard-working artisan, or thrifty tenant, to make both ends meet.

But while this measure narrowed the extent of the term "unemployment," the question of determining its meaning still remained. The problem was settled, not through computation of hours or kind of work, but on the basis of need or want, which is the fundamental social, if not the logical, import of the term. It was determined that a workman whose income from any source—wages, property, investments, pensions—did not amount to a certain sum (during 1916, four francs a week), was in a state of want or need, and was, therefore, entitled to assistance. To prevent the idle or the thriftless from taking advantage of the situation, it was determined that only those who could show certificates of employment for at least fifteen days of June and July, 1914, should be entitled to assistance, taking into account, of course, those cases where the state of unemployment at that time could be shown to be involuntary.

Granting then that the financial status of an unemployed laborer or artisan has been satisfactorily determined, he is, in the simplest case of complete unemployment and no resources, entitled to the following:

Head of household	3	francs per week
Housekeeper (usually wife)	1.50	francs per week
Children under 16	50	centimes per week
Children over 16, formerly employed or at school	3	francs per week

According to the plan adopted in the various regions, the actual income is delivered in cash, or in "bons," that is, orders for a ration at the communal Provisioning Committee or upon accredited tradesmen for native supplies; or a portion may be made by tickets on the canteens. The money payment then enables a person to buy the native foodstuffs necessary to complete the insufficient C.R.B. ration.

The question at once arises as to whether body and soul can be kept together upon the foregoing allowance, and it is of interest to compare it with the pre-war cost of living in Belgium. Rowntree's calculations (*Land and Labour in Belgium*), based on the investigation of 57 communes (probably in 1909), show that, even under normal conditions, the minimum sum with which the food necessary to maintain the physical forces in a satisfactory condition can be purchased in Belgium is:

Man	3.25	francs per week
Woman	2.60	francs per week
Child	1.75	francs per week

This table would indicate that the allowances above would be insufficient, even in peace times, to maintain a family in strength and health; and under present conditions of 200 to 500 per cent increase in prices, it is assuredly highly inadequate. In fact, the town of Charleroi, with its small charitable endowment in a large population of workmen, found a long time ago that it was necessary to raise the critical point of need from 4 to 5 francs. Somehow or other, either by direct charity or through employment, at least the 5 francs a week must be got to maintain life, if not full strength. In many districts this supplement is found in the fund for general assistance, in which case, if in an urban district, the additional help takes the form of a ticket on canteens either partly or wholly gratuitous.

In view of the increasingly difficult situation during the past winter, and dearness of native foodstuffs, the central organization has recently granted an additional allowance of 2.50 francs per month to each person completely depending on public assistance. This was done to replace the supplementary uncooked food rations of those going to the "Soupes," which, unfortunately, the Commission has not been able to furnish, due to diminished importations. In addition to this aid in food and money, the central organization also provides free medical assistance to families of soldiers and officers, as well as to all those of the needy class. This help is particularly essential at the present time when health conditions are failing, due to an insufficient diet for the people.

Besides those wholly without employment, a second category exists of the partially unemployed, and the problem of the just allotment of assistance to these cases is the most difficult of all the perplexing questions faced by the Communal Charity Committees, and is the one which calls for the greatest amount of caution, inspection, and control. Under the conditions of work existing in the zone of occupation, almost all kinds of employment were exceedingly precarious as well as scanty. A workman might be employed the whole of one week and be idle the next, or he might work the whole or part of one day, or the whole or part of several days of the week; and it was the duty of the Communal Charity Committee concerned, to ascertain each week, or perhaps several times a week, the amount of wages the workman had received, before the amount of assistance he was entitled to was determined under the rulings adopted by the Relief Organization.

The Relief Organization, in order to stimulate labor, exempted five francs of wages from the deductions applied to the benefit of applicants for assistance. In other words, a worker is considered unemployed so long as his income does not exceed five francs a week, as the "premium on work." If above that amount, then a series of deductions come into play. The complexity of this problem is indicated by the following reproduction of the valuations in daily income of certain types of property, and consequently their deducible value from the allowance:

I. *Property—*

1. House, 0 to 4 francs per week, according to value; owners of houses above 7,000 francs excluded. Owner can get through mortgage enough to cover theoretical need.

2. Land, 50 centimes per week per 10 ares (about 0.25 acre).
3. Cows, 50 centimes per day.
4. Hogs, 25 centimes per day.
5. Calves, 25 centimes per day.
6. Heifers, 25 centimes per day.
7. Hens, .02 centimes per day.
8. Savings books—weekly tax of 50 per cent for face value above 500 francs.

II. *Public assistance*—
1. Bureau de Bienfaisance—amount granted.
2. Old-age pensions—amount granted.

III. *Private assistance*—
1. Accident pensions—amount granted.
2. Pension of benevolent society—amount granted.

The "theoretical need" of a family of five would be 20 francs per week. If such a family had 2 cows, a house (in the 2-franc class), 4 acres of land, and received 75 centimes per week from the Bureau de Bienfaisance, it would receive nothing from the General Assistance Fund. The family or individual condition was determined at regular intervals. In fixing house-value the Hainaut Commission took the amount of fire insurance and deducted 25 per cent.

Each receiver of relief is furnished with an identity card, upon which such relief as may be granted him must be mentioned. Any changes that may happen to the unemployed person's position, and his family, are also specified. This card must be produced on any request made by the delegates of any of the committee. Payment is made at least once fortnightly, and the unemployed person must call personally, furnished with the identity card.

The numbers receiving assistance in this branch are difficult of accurate determination, owing to all the variables of partial employment and irregularity of need. The original lists prepared in April, 1915, showed 646,199 necessitous unemployed, skilled workers of both sexes, with 227,096 dependent adults, and 474,627 dependent children under 16, a total of 1,347,922 persons. In May the lists had increased to 741,494 necessitous workers, 255,370 dependent adults, and 558,722 dependent children, a total of 1,555,586. In midsummer the lists had further increased to 764,222 necessitous workers, 269,380 dependent adults and 630,998 children, a total of 1,664,600. This represents the high-water mark. The numbers fluctuate with seasonal employment, and various measures have been taken to reduce the lists by eliminations, establishments of adults and children on to other funds, and, in the case of 40,000 lace-workers, to put them in a position of self-support, and thus reduce the ultimate burden on this division. The result of all these measures has been to reduce the totals by February, 1916, to 685,849 necessitous skilled workers, 318,149 dependent adults and 503,678 dependent children, or a total of 1,507,676. The latest available figures (September, 1916) give the numbers respectively as 701,451, 304,015, 634,144, or a total of 1,639,610. This latter figure shows the trend of increasingly difficult conditions, and the growing lack of employment during 1916. These numbers, however, cannot be taken as absolute, since some com-

munes do not return the number of those who receive partial assistance in their lists. In any event, these figures comprise over 40 per cent of the total skilled labor in Belgium.

The expenditure upon this division from its initiation in February, 1915, to the 31st March 1917, was $49,678,781.07.

The labor question in Belgium.—A question may arise in the reader's mind—has the aid which is being given to the unemployed had a tendency toward creating a desire for idleness? The Committee's allowance has been fixed at such a low figure that only by rarest exception would a man be satisfied to live on the scant subsistence which it affords. Furthermore, for every position in Belgium there are three men anxious and willing to fill the place. For this reason it has always been a great concern to the Commission and to the central Belgian organization to provide work for the great mass of the unemployed. If profitable employment could be created the people could live better, would be independent of public assistance, and would conserve thus their self-respect and their former habits of thrift and industry. This has been a most perplexing problem, a solution of which has not been found up to the present time.

In the early months of her occupation of Belgium, Germany requisitioned the larger part of all raw materials in the country. Manufacturing was therefore greatly reduced. The Allied Governments refused to replace this requisitioned material by permitting new importations of iron, copper, cotton, etc., into Belgium, which step they felt would only serve to lengthen the war by adding to Germany's economic resources, except on one express condition, that the raw material imported into Belgium be re-exported *in toto,* and that the money so realized be deposited in England until the end of the war. The financial and monetary systems of Belgium and Germany are so closely bound up, that Belgian exports and the return flow of money into the country would serve in bracing Germany's exchange on foreign markets. Furthermore, the building up of funds in Belgium would permit the occupying authorities to bleed the country and towns of even greater sums than those demanded at present. The Belgian Government at Havre and her Allies, rather than offer such aid to Germany, preferred to pay any amount in charity to support the inhabitants of Belgium. Germany acquiesced to the re-exportation of the finished products from raw materials, but insisted that the revenue from this source be deposited in Belgium. As a result the plan[14] fell through.

The Commission through its representatives has tried on different occasions to revive special industries. As a typical case, last winter in Hainaut the representative at Mons made efforts to re-establish the manufacture of simile-marble at Basècles. This town, of 4,500 inhabitants, practically lived from this trade before the war, making large exports to America. After two years of conflict the population had fallen into a lamentable condition of need through lack of employment. Happily, the Commission was able to secure permission from the Allies to export the marble pieces which were to have been

[14] See chapter ix.

shipped to America in returning empty C.R.B. ships. The plan was held up, however, by the Germans, who claimed a shortage of transportation facilities for the shipment of the necessary lime from Northern France into Belgium.

The insolvable complications which thus arise each time have effectively blocked all projects of exportation from Belgium. Within the country itself, therefore, the only work to be created is that of making public improvements and of building roads. Men placed at this work, however, would require more than their 40 centimes assistance per day. Large additional sums of money for the maintenance of such undertakings would be required, and up to the present time it has not been possible to finance Belgium for more than the bare living needs of her inhabitants' demand. The question might be raised: Why not make each man who received his 3 francs per week do at least a day's or half-day's work in seven on roads as a return for this grant? In the first place, road construction is precluded in many districts because of lack of materials, and inability to secure same by the ordinary means of transportation. In the second place, work of this kind, done by a large number of men each working only a portion of the week, would be difficult of efficient organization. Its possibility, however—even its advisability—is not to be denied.

In spite of adversity, many towns and regions have attempted to afford regular employment to their workingmen at living wages by the construction and repair of roads. Practically all such work, however, was stopped last fall by the occupying authorities, who asserted that the municipalities were thus employing their able-bodied men so that the latter might not be requisitioned for German service. As soon as the men were forced into idleness, Germany has tried by force, with considerable lack of success up to the present time, to incorporate them into her industrial army.[15]

In brief, then, it will be seen that the labor question in Belgium is one of extreme complexity, which from day to day is growing farther from, rather than nearer to its solution.

Bureaux de Bienfaisance.—These institutions, established in each commune, have the care in normal times of all classes of poverty not otherwise looked after. Consequently they perform, in very large measure, either singly or in combination, the duty of providing for the insane, weak-minded, orphans, infirm, etc. Their resources are obtained not only by receipts from charity and private endowment, but also by communal taxation and by subventions from what is known as the "Common Fund." Through this latter fund the load is more or less equalized between the richer and the poorer communes, it being contributed to by all the communes in each province and also receiving a proportional subvention from the National Government. As the subventions of the National Government ceased with the outbreak of war, the Bureaux de Bienfaisance were then plunged into financial difficulties, and the central organization had to come to their assistance. This has been done by means of advances to the "Common Fund" equal to those normally contributed by the National

[15] See chapter x.

Government. These advances up to the 31st March 1917, amounted to $1,122,510.96.

It is difficult, under the present circumstances, to determine the number of individuals supported by these official bureaux. The destitute, insane, infirm, aged, orphans, etc., in normal times, aggregate probably 300,000 persons, but the probable tendency of war relief has been to decrease their burden, especially because of the substituted provision for the unemployed. On the other hand, the normal flow of local charity has been toward the war relief organizations, and their resources are thus curtailed.

Advances to educational institutions.—To a considerable extent the educational system of Belgium is, in normal times, in receipt of subsidies from the National Government in addition to the resources from local taxation and private endowment. The suspension of the National Government subsidies threatened not only the public schools but also a number of other institutions with closure or restriction of activities, and it was, therefore, determined to make advances in such amounts as would tide them over; up to the 31st March 1917, a total of $2,009,821.69 had been so advanced by the central organization.

Assistance to officers' families.—This committee was formed to provide assistance to the families of army officers and non-commissioned officers deprived of their support through the war. The families thus assisted embrace not only those of regular soldiers, but also those of the gendarmes and the civilian militia, whether deceased or absent on military duty. This committee maintains its head office in Brussels, and has subcommittees in the principal localities which forward all information and requests to the central office for action. The allowances are based on the actual need of the families. The total number of such families averages about 3,500, and the total allowance up to the 31st March, 1917, was $1,674,053.89.

Assistance to children and to war orphans in charitable institutions.—In order to provide for the care of war orphans and to subsidize the important work being done for destitute children in Belgium, grants totaling $213,953.90 have been made.

Co-operative loan society.—This society, entitled the Société Coopérative d'Avances et de Prêts, was organized early in the work for the purpose of furnishing loans directly to individuals and to institutions of a public and semi-public character. All loans are made on security at the rate of 3 per cent per annum and are based not only on the amount of security, but on the needs of the borrower. Individual borrowers are required to set out a request in writing, accompanied with documentary evidence, which is at once investigated by the society. The process has been simplified in every manner possible in order that the service may be rapid and efficient. Loans to individuals are granted on all varieties of security, such as stocks and shares; income, payment of which has been suspended either through business stagnation or prohibition of the belligerent governments; deposits in suspended institutions; outstanding post-office money-orders; executable judgments; arrears of pensions; arrears of salary to civil service employees; life insurance policies; requisition

Letter, 12 April 1918, Whitlock to Hoover

receipts; land, property, and chattels; in short, all varieties of security and to all classes of the community in possession of tangible or intangible property rendered unrealizable by the war. Furthermore, loans are made to institutions such as orphan asylums, convents, private schools, etc. The total of the advances to the society by the central organization up to the end of March 1917 was $24,161,321.95. There can be no question of the beneficent work of this institution in stemming the distress of classes to whom such misfortune comes with peculiar poignancy.

National Savings Bank.—This institution, La Caisse d'Epargne, owing to the removal of its securities abroad prior to invasion, ultimately found itself unable to meet payment due to its depositors. Advances have, therefore, been made to the institution under the restriction that no payments are to be made to depositors beyond their minimum living necessities, and that such payments be made from month to month. A total of $3,246,062.98 has so far been advanced by the Relief Organization.

Building and loan institutions.—There exist a great number of institutions of this character throughout Belgium which have been largely engaged in the erection of workmen's houses. Many are faced with difficulty through default of their members, and, alternately, the members are faced with difficulties through the inability of the institutions to carry on their functions. There was, therefore, set up a mutual institution, entitled Auxiliaire des Sociétés d'Habitations Ouvrières, the capital of which was subscribed partly by public-spirited individuals and partly by some thirty different building and loan societies, the central organization in turn making substantial loans to the mutual society thus created. The new society did not at first deal with private individuals directly, but only through its component building and loan associations; latterly, some loans have been made to individuals who are not directly affiliated with the building and loan associations. The moneys provided by the central organization are advanced at the rate of 2½ per cent, and are in turn reloaned by the associations at the same rate. The loans are used for the completion of partly constructed houses, for the repair of destroyed buildings, and for making monthly advances to building and loan society members in personal difficulties. The total advances on this account to the 31st March, 1917, were $508,660.97.

Advances to provincial governments.—Considerable sums of money were due to the provincial governments by the National Government at the time of the evacuation. These sums were in turn due to the communes, and were necessary to enable them to maintain their regular services, and especially to continue their subsidies to the Bureaux de Bienfaisance, and their contributions to the support of the bread line. In order to enable these obligations to be met the Relief Organization has advanced the sums which were thus due, amounting at the 31st March, 1917, to a total of $2,496,005.09.

Sundries.—Advances in the nature of relief loans have been made to various other institutions throughout the country, amounting to a total of $952,675.09. Expenses of General Committees have been incurred to the extent of $14,987.83.

3. *Care of the Destitute in Northern France, 1915–1917*

POPULATION

The occupied provinces of Northern France comprise an area somewhat over half that of Belgium, and have a normal population of about 3,000,000 people. Owing to mobilization, flight, and other causes, the civil population on the 1st January of this year had been reduced to approximately 2,150,000 individuals. A special incidence of this reduction of population is the extraction of the able-bodied men and consequent large preponderance of women, children, and aged in the population. Recent changes in the front have further reduced its population to 2,000,000, large numbers of French refugees having been evacuated into Belgium.

Over one-half of this population is concentrated in the intensely developed industrial districts in the neighborhood of Lille and Valenciennes, which comprise less than one-eighth of the total occupied area and even now have a population of over 1,000 per square mile. The other half of the population is largely agricultural in character and averages at present about 145 per square mile.

Army Zone.—This area lies completely within the zone of active operations of the German army. The population is entirely interdicted from movement, there is no post or telegraph nor communication of any character; the whole transportation machinery is devoted to military activities. Except for some trivial commodities brought from Holland, there are no imports except relief supplies and no exports whatever. In consequence, the whole of the great industrial population is reduced to total unemployment.

The agricultural activity is greatly reduced, due to the mobilization of the men, the great shortage of draft cattle, fertilizers, and other necessaries. The gradual exhaustion of stocks contained in the mercantile establishments throughout the country has in the end resulted in empty shelves and closed doors, so that the "small commerce" of the country has now come practically to a standstill.

All banking operations have ceased and all metallic money and standard currency have disappeared, the only medium of exchange being local notes issued by each commune and accepted only within the limits of each such commune. The imports of the Commission, confined as they are by transportation and purchase difficulties practically to cereals and fats alone, compose but the bare minimum necessity to support human existence. In the winter and spring of 1916 the meager local supplies of potatoes, vegetables, and meat were finally exhausted.

Extent of destitution.—It is obvious that there must be an enormous percentage of destitution, and, in fact, a discussion as to what proportion of the population is destitute becomes merely a definition of what constitutes destitution. Less than half the population have the means with which to pay for their ration, and this class depend very largely on loans made to them by the communal governments. To another class, food is advanced "on credit" until the end of the war. To the third class, all relief and food rations are given free. In the district of Charleville, one of the more agricultural and least

destitute regions in Northern France, at the end of September, 1916, the three above-mentioned classes constituted respectively 48, 38, and 14 per cent of the population. In a word, either by loans from the communes, by food advances, or by gifts, practically the whole population is dependent.

Curiously enough, in these circumstances, the relief of destitution becomes a simpler problem than in Belgium. In Northern France the Relief Organization could not make any attempt to maintain the economic machinery of the country, or to organize effective measures of self-help by supplementing individual resources, as in the case of Belgium. In a broad way the whole area is an internment camp, and all the population is on a ration and to all present purposes is destitute. The entire organization is reduced to the simple problem of placing a ration, adapted so far as may be to local needs, justly in the hands of every man, woman, and child, and to provide a system of accounting by which at least some part of the cost may be recoverable after the war.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE RELIEF

The communes in Northern France have been grouped into six principal districts, each under a district committee. An American representative of the Commission is attached to each committee. These six district committees act under the instructions of and in coordination with the Commission for Relief's head office in Brussels. A central committee exists termed the Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France, but its functions except as an accounting agency are nominal. The district committees deal directly with the communal and municipal authorities, there being the 1st January 2,133 such communes. Since that time the number has been reduced to about 1,800.

Financial organization.—The imported foodstuffs are debited to the district committees. The district committees in turn debit the foodstuffs to the communes at a small advance sufficient to cover local expenses. At this point in the cycle an involved transaction is necessary owing to the practical disappearance of normal circulating medium from the country, and in order to provide for the subsequent recovery of some of the outlay on provisioning the population from those members of the community who have property and resources at present unrealizable.

Each commune prints its own notes from 5 centimes up to 50 francs, and this currency is being put into circulation by (*a*) payment for communal services; (*b*) loans to individuals against property; (*c*) benevolence to the destitute.

The ration provided by the Commission for Relief is then sold in return for this currency, and it serves as well to enable the holder to purchase such supplementary native foodstuffs as may still exist outside the imports of the Commission. Thus between the loans and benevolence the whole population is enabled to secure its food supply. The local money, therefore, amounts practically to a food ticket, and in last analysis is but a facile method of accounting. The communes enter into an obligation to pay for the foodstuffs delivered

to them three months after peace, and the French Government makes advances to the Commission for Relief in Belgium against these obligations. Thus, after the war, the communes will be able to collect some portion of the loans which they have made to individuals, and will be able thus to pay some portion of the obligations which they in turn have taken to the institutions through the Commission for Relief. The whole arrangement is one which, so far as food supply is concerned, calls for no present public charity, but it is a situation which will yet demand the benevolence of the French people when the period of liquidation arrives.

General relief.—Public canteens ("Soupes Populaires") are organized here in many towns as in Belgium. The system, however, has not had such a wide application in the former territory because of the fact that in France all classes are more or less reduced to the same level of need.

Butter, milk, meat, and other foodstuffs are quite as unavailable to the well off and middle class as to the poor in Northern France, because of the fact that nearly all cattle have either been requisitioned by the German army or already consumed by the population. There is therefore not the same necessity of specializing in the aid of the poor which exists in Belgium, where the more well-to-do class can purchase native foodstuffs. The entire population in France, save the farmers, is classed as "needy."

Baby canteens are established in a large number of communes, and furnish condensed milk where a supply of natural milk is not available.

Loan banks, similar to the institutions in Belgium, advance money to temporarily embarrassed persons whose credit is reliable. Monthly allocations in money are paid to the families of mobilized men or of French prisoners interned in Germany.

CLOTHING

The foregoing arrangement provides a barely sufficient food supply, but is not available for clothing. For this the Commission has appealed to the charitable world in conjunction with the appeal for Belgium. A further amount of clothing has been purchased out of the small margin retained on foodstuffs from the debits of the regional committees. Of all clothing materials obtained by the Commission through benevolence, roughly one-third is sent to Northern France and two-thirds to Belgium. While the mathematical ratio would be about one-quarter and three-quarters, the more bitter necessities of the French people had determined this division. Workrooms for making up new materials and the revision and repairs of old clothing have been opened in each district.

4. *After 1917 and Summary*

After the spring of 1917, when the foregoing report was written, there was no fundamental change in the organization or methods of caring for the destitute until the Armis-

tice. Destitution in Belgium steadily increased with the passing months and in October 1918, of a total population of approximately 5,500,000 in the General Government Zone, 4,263,735 applied for and received assistance at the various institutions of relief.[16] The inevitable undernourishment, particularly during the period of the U-boat blockade, was reflected in an increase in sickness which filled the hospitals and required special measures. An extensive program of supplementary rations was formulated by the Commission but was limited in its fulfilment, as was the general program, by the difficulties of importation. The successful endeavors of the Commission in these years to provide special aid to children have been already described.

After the Armistice, during the winter of 1918–19, the benevolent operations of the Commission were continued and extended to new fields where necessary. Large stocks of food and clothing were poured into the previously occupied territories,[17] temporary housing was provided for the returning populations of the devastated regions, and special support was given to hospitals, children's clinics, and a general child health program.[18]

During the whole period of relief operations the total expenditure for the general benevolent program was $615,237,147.47. The following tables show how this sum was applied in the relief of destitution through the co-operating relief organizations—the Commission, the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation, the Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France (till 1918), the Comité Général de Ravitaillement des Régions Libérées, the Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées, and the various subsidiary provincial, communal, and special committees.

[16] The number of applicants given for the date of the 25th October 1918 in the *Annuaire Statistique de la Belgique et du Congo belge 1915–1919*, published by the Belgian Ministry of the Interior and Health are: Soupes populaires, 2,452,738; Repas scolaires, 252,213; Cantines maternelles, 44,004; Enfants débiles, 140,914; Tuberculeux, 77,677; Restaurants economiques, 221,921; Gouttes de lait, 74,268.

[17] Chapter iii, Documents 111 to 114.

[18] Chapter vi, Documents 306 to 313; chapter xiii, Documents 524 to 526.

ANALYSIS OF BENEVOLENT EXPENDITURES BY COUNTRY, 1914–1919

BELGIUM

I. Benevolent Account of the Commission

Gift Clothing in Belgium		
Through Comité National	$12,110,164.66	
Direct	844.71	$ 12,111,009.37
Provisions and Clothing to Belgian Refugees		
At Havre	$ 341,257.18	
In Holland	1,022,619.26	1,363,876.44
Cash Donations to Sundry Funds		
Belgian children at The Hague, evacuées, refugees, and supplementary donation to special funds, etc.		232,584.01
Special Funds		
Brussels' Office Relief Fund	$ 988,675.53	
Forbes' Fund	49,549.03	1,038,224.56
Educational Purposes (chap. xiii, Documents 527–532)		33,766,039.62
Allocations from Benevolent Account of Commission to Central Committees for Benevolence (distribution included below)	($115,441,314.26)	
Direct Benevolent Expenditures by the Commission		$48,511,734.00

II. Benevolent Expenditure through Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation

Canteens and Soup Kitchens		$125,948,596.40
Clothing		28,045,642.20
Aid to Families of Soldiers		
Relief of families without support	$84,924,536.53	
Supplementary aid	183,603.31	
Expert medical advice	895,029.83	
Families of officers	8,300,528.60	
Invalids and mutilated	1,808,518.90	
Widows of soldiers	111,384.83	96,223,602.00
Patronized Institutions		
Government employees	$54,345,422.90	
Children and war orphans	26,183,136.20	
Belgian evacuées	15,106,105.60	
Anti-Tuberculosis League	4,708,284.90	
Medical aid	7,686,862.76	
Cheap restaurants	5,280,400.44	
Refugees	1,686,833.90	
Aid to artists	857,122.50	
Aid to foreigners	1,300,279.50	
Assistance to dispossessed	344,110.20	
Churches, Assistance Discrète, journalists, National Commission of Arts and Letters, prisoners, etc.	6,848,062.60	124,346,621.50
Suspended Aid		
Subsidies to provinces for soup kitchens	$31,243,349.05	
Subsidies to provinces for providing shelter	553,740.15	
Gifts of fuel	3,374,837.13	
Supplementary rations	9,082,791.08	
Relief to provinces	2,266,871.24	
Aid to unemployed	61,382,787.49	
Charitable institutions	997,603.83	
Schools	2,371,332.43	111,273,312.40
Pension Service		971,602.35
Aid in the Form of Moral Guarantees		
Building and loan institutions	$ 670,227.87	
Agricultural loans	102,781.80	
Loans to foreigners	1,930.93	
Anti-Tuberculosis League	572,834.64	
National Savings Bank	3,246,062.90	
Sundry loans	306,787.96	4,900,626.10

Lace Industry		$ 1,535,026.00
Provisions and Cash Donations to Special Committees: (Cardinal Mercier's fund, Belgian Bishop fund, workrooms, Brussels, Antwerp, etc., Bureaux de Bienfaisance, Belgian Red Cross, sick funds, apprentice studios, labor exchanges, assistance discrète, gifts of food to cities of Ghent, Ostend, etc.; gifts to various communes and many others)		8,926,850.47
Salaries, General Expenses, Interest		7,703,244.25
Total Benevolent Expenditure through Comité National		$509,875,123.67
Total Benevolent Expenditure in Belgium		$558,386,857.67

NORTHERN FRANCE

I. Benevolent Account of Commission

Gift Clothing in Northern France		
Through Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France	$ 42,379.32	
Through Comité Général de Ravitaillement des Régions Libérées	4,881,170.60	$ 4,923,549.92
Gift Clothing—To French refugees in Holland		39,598.19
Provisions and Clothing—Child welfare in Lille		2,012.75
Cash Donations to Sundry Funds		
Lille Benevolent Fund	$ 204,097.47	
Child welfare	679.00	
Refugees at Evian	381.88	205,158.35
Benevolence through Paris Office of Commission		
Executive Committee, C.R.B. Benevolent Fund	$ 816,015.71	
French Red Cross for child welfare	20,297.45	
Child welfare in Thoulis	477.36	
Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées	669,165.74	1,505,956.26
Special Allocation for Benevolence		
Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France:		
Food, lodging, clothes, etc.	$ 1,524,058.98	
Overshoes, meat, etc.	221,860.81	
Rice (reduction in selling price)	308,946.16	
Charitable restaurants	160,408.04	
Miscellaneous	457,954.37	2,673,228.36
Special Allocation for Benevolence		
Comité Général de Ravitaillement des Régions Libérées		
Reduction of prices of provisions and clothing	$ 5,537,401.56	
Subsidy to maintain bread prices	763,779.53	
Rebates to districts for benevolent expenditure	2,611,084.80	
Supplementary food for children. Free distribution	2,577,755.92	11,490,021.81
French Refugees in Holland and elsewhere		
Refugees and evacuées in Holland	$ 224,002.36	
French children in Holland	21,849.03	
French prisoners of war in Holland	6,940.25	
Miscellaneous relief, Havre, Lille, Evian, etc.	29,796.34	282,587.98
Gifts to Northern France (see Chapter xiii, Documents 525 and 526)		
To Comité Général de Ravitaillement des Régions Libérées	$ 78,959.80	
To American Relief Administration for Child Feeding in Northern France	25,000.00	103,959.80
Allocations from Benevolent Account of Commission to Central Committees for Benevolence (distribution included below)	(681,569.09)	
Total for Northern France from Benevolent Account of Commission		$21,226,073.42

II. Benevolent Expenditure through Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France

Assistance to French Citizens in Belgium		
Provisions	$ 6,365,476.89	
Coal and fuel	96,026.52	
Soup	2,415,533.72	
Medical aid	517,785.27	
Supplementary food	125,943.55	
Cheap restaurants	91,541.78	
Sundry aid	64,473.90	
Central committee	40,098.42	
Child feeding	398,728.45	
Children's aid societies	18,711.81	
Interest allowed provincial committees	28,493.87	$10,162,814.18
Assistance to Evacuées in Belgium		
French evacuées	$12,248,738.23	
Foreign evacuées	351,606.28	
Temporary evacuées	1,848,926.79	
Teaching personnel	16,392.02	
General expense	1,775.22	
Clothing	177,220.00	
Repatriation cost	46,911.15	
Interest allowed provincial committees	1,061,180.14	15,752,749.83
Subsidies to French Organizations		
Benevolent Society in Maubeuge	$ 3,341.53	
Benevolent Society in Cousolre	3,341.53	
Savings Bank, Givet, etc.	64,939.47	71,622.53
Clothing		5,230,231.80
Sundry Benevolence		
Assistance in cash	$ 1,241,409.47	
Liberated prisoners	86,937.39	
Clothing and general expenses	140,203.51	1,468,550.37
Total Benevolence of Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France		$32,685,968.71
Balance in Liquidation Distributed in Benevolence		
Credits to districts	$ 190,944.88	
Aid to unemployed	185,299.95	
Gifts of chocolate	197,005.53	
Coal	106,076.06	
Shoes	85,980.20	
Biscuits, clothing expenses, etc.	105,253.10	870,559.72
Grand Total Expenditure through Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France		$33,556,528.43
Total Benevolent Expenditures in Northern France		$54,782,601.85

NORTHERN RELIEF

I. Benevolent Account of the Commission

As a result of an appeal made in the United States by the Commission, there became available for distribution during the year 1918–19 over 15,000 tons of gift secondhand clothing. The requirements of the people of Belgium and of Northern France were met by the distribution of 10,000 tons throughout Belgium and 4,000 tons throughout Northern France. A quantity of 938 tons of secondhand clothing consisting of 2,130,813 garments and 114,883 pairs of shoes, valued at $2,067,687.95, was turned over to the American Relief Administration for distribution, principally in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Chapter XVII

GERMAN GUARANTEES AND DECLARATIONS

The purpose of the present chapter is to bring together letters, notes, memoranda, and decrees of German origin which indicate significant aspects of German policy respecting the conduct of relief. Documents in preceding chapters have shown how the entire relief undertaking rested on guarantees secured from the belligerents by the Commission directly or through the diplomatic patrons. It has also been indicated how the actual conduct of relief was circumscribed by official decrees, orders, and various regulations. In the case of the Allies these regulations were relatively few and the important ones have already been given. Because relief was delivered in territories under German control, guarantees and regulations of German origin are much more numerous. The more important of these official declarations have also been included in earlier chapters, but they are insufficient for a full view of the Imperial Government's relief policy. Supplementary documents are therefore given in this chapter accompanied either by descriptive titles or reproductions in the original language of those documents included in earlier pages.[1]

The guarantees and declarations noted here and likewise those given by the Allies relate to one of the most important features of the Commission's public relations. They represent a series of conventions on the matter of relief between the belligerents, but both belligerents relied on the Commission as the medium through which the "conventions" were negotiated and as the agency to insure their execution. The reason for this dependence on the Commission is shown in a statement by the British Foreign Office made at a time when it became necessary for the Commission to resign some of its functions because of the American diplomatic break with Germany. The British Foreign Office wrote ". . . . it must be remembered that the diplomatic patrons of the Commission cannot, in view of their position and the

[1] The C.R.B. archives do not contain certain documents in the original language. This is due to the fact that many of the official communications were addressed to the diplomatic patrons who retained the originals for their records and furnished the Commission with translations.

policy of their Governments, go beyond a certain length in pressing the demands of the Relief Commission upon the Germans. In the past it has been Mr. Hoover's ability and energy which have enabled the Allied Governments to secure guarantees from the Germans, which could never have been obtained by the ordinary methods of neutral diplomacy."[2] The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs could have made a similar declaration.

In the matter of restrictions on the conduct of relief, the regulations of the belligerents were often in conflict or unacceptable to one side or the other and it fell to the Commission to secure such modification or adjustment as would permit the work to go on. Having secured the minimum restrictions, the Commission became responsible to the belligerents for their observance. There were, of course, a great many declarations, decrees, and orders issued by the Germans with which the Commission had no direct concern. The documents which follow are selected from those which bear in some way on the Commission's public relations. It will be observed that the number of undertakings and declarations fell off after the first year, for by that time the basic policy and technic of relief had become established. New guarantees were required only as new situations arose in the changing course of the war.

The documents of this chapter and the titles of those given elsewhere are arranged chronologically in three groups:

1. Those affecting relief as a whole.
2. Those relating to operations in the territory under the German General Government in Belgium.
3. Those relating to operations in the Army Zones of Belgium and Northern France.

1. *Guarantees Affecting the Relief as a Whole. 1914–1918*

The documents in this group include the Berlin Government assurances of approval of the general principle of relief[3] and its subsequent confirmation of agreements and

[2] Document 491, chapter xii, British Foreign Office to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22d March 1917.

[3] Documents concerning German policy toward the Relief are incomplete without reference to Hoover's memoranda of conferences in Berlin in February 1915 (Documents 133 to 142, chapter iv). These personal assurances from the highest authorities were invaluable to Hoover in interpreting the intentions behind the formal declarations issued through the German Foreign Office.

undertakings of the General Government in Belgium and Army Headquarters in Northern France. Here also are the important guarantees and orders covering the movement of the Commission's ships, safe-conduct passes, routes, and markings for relief vessels. The Commission secured practically all these agreements from the Berlin Foreign Office through the American Ambassador and later through Spanish diplomatic channels.

[1]

"Note Verbale," 16 October 1914, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE TO AMBASSADOR GERARD, *stating the German Government's approval of Belgian relief* (Document 10, chapter i, is an English translation of this note)

[2] DOCUMENT NO. 602

"Note Verbale," 14 November 1914, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE TO THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *stating that the Governor-General in Belgium has been requested to aid the American Relief Commission for Belgium as far as military interests permit*

Auswärtiges Amt
Nr. 111b. 20140

89382

VERBALNOTE

Das Auswärtige Amt beehrt sich, der Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika auf die Verbalnote vom 31. v. M.—F. O. Nr. 958—mitzuteilen, dass der Verwaltungschef bei dem Kaiserlichen Generalgouverneur in Belgien ersucht worden ist, den Wünschen wegen Förderung der Amerikanischen Hilfskommission für Belgien zu entsprechen, soweit es die militärischen Interessen gestatten.

BERLIN, den 14. November 1914

An die Botschaft
der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika

[3]

"Note Verbale," 23 November 1914, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE TO THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *giving official approval to the C.R.B. and guaranteeing freedom from seizure to non-neutral vessels carrying supplies of the C.R.B. to Dutch ports* (Document 22, chapter i, is an English translation of the following)

Abschrift
II W K Belg. 179 (Angabe)

92810

VERBALNOTE

Das Auswärtige Amt beehrt sich, der Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika auf die Verbalnote vom 14. November 1914—

F.O. 1105—zu erwidern, dass die Kaiserliche Regierung den dankenswerten Bemühungen der amerikanischen Kommission in Belgien, die dortige Bevölkerung mit Lebensmitteln zu versorgen, durchaus sympathisch gegenübersteht. Sie ist deshalb bis auf weiteres und vorbehaltlich etwa notwendig werdenden jederzeitigen Widerrufs gern damit einverstanden, dass die Beförderung der fraglichen Lebensmittel nach niederländischen Häfen auch in anderen als neutralen Schiffen stattfindet, und wird auch in diesem Falle die gleiche Garantie für die bestimmungsmässige Verwendung der Lebensmittel gewähren, wie wenn die Beförderung in neutralen Schiffen erfolgt wäre. Um der Beschlagnahme durch deutsche Kriegsschiffe auf See vorzubeugen, empfiehlt es sich, dass solche nicht neutralen Schiffe mit einem Ausweis einer zuständigen amerikanischen Behörde versehen werden, in welchem gesagt ist, dass das Schiff Lebensmittel führt, welche durch die amerikanische Hülfskommission mit Zustimmung der Deutschen Regierung über niederländische Häfen nach Belgien zur Ernährung der dortigen Bevölkerung gebracht werden sollen und dass ausserdem die nicht neutralen Schiffe einen auf Grund des genannten Ausweises vom Kaiserlich Deutschen Botschafter in Washington auszustellenden Pass mit sich führen.

Berlin, den 23. November 1914

An die Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika
Está conforme

[4]

"Note Verbale," 24 December 1914, German Foreign Office to the Embassy of the United States of America, *stating certificates required for non-neutral ships carrying C.R.B. cargoes* (Document 196, chapter v, is an English translation of the following)

Abschrift
11 W.K. Be. 306 (Angabe)
104892

Verbalnote

Das Auswärtige Amt beehrt sich der Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika im Anschluss an die Verbalnote vom 23. v.M/, II W K Be. 179, betreffend die Zufuhr von Lebensmitteln für die Belgische Bevölkerung, mitzuteilen, dass es erwünscht erscheint, in die Ausweise, mit denen nicht neutrale Schiffe zu versehen sind, folgende Angaben aufzunehmen:

a. die ausdrückliche Erklärung:

(1) dass das Schiff nur Lebensmittel (und Kleidungsstücke) für die belgische Bevölkerung zur Ausschiffung in einem niederländischen Hafen enthält.

(2) die ehrenwörtliche Verpflichtung des Schiffsführers, sich auf Hin- und Rückfahrt aller Handlungen zu enthalten, die eine Unterstützung unserer Gegner in sich schliessen.

b. es ist ferner erwünscht, dass folgende Hinweise darin enthalten sind:

(3) dass Ausweis und Pass nur für die einmalige Hinfahrt gelten und nach Ankunft im niederländischen Bestimmungshafen dem dortigen Deutschen Konsul und, wenn ein solcher nicht vorhanden ist, dem Deutschen Gesandten im Haag zuzustellen sind. Für die Rückfahrt werden entsprechende Papiere wie für die Hinfahrt durch die Kaiserlich Deutsche Gesandtschaft im Haag ausgestellt werden.

(4) dass die Papiere eine Durchsuchung des Schiffes nicht ausschliessen und die Ladung so gestaut sein muss, dass die Durchsuchung schnell und leicht vor sich gehen kann.

(5) dass der Zeitpunkt der Abfahrt aus den Vereinigten Staaten dem Kaiserlich Deutschen Botschafter in Washington, der Zeitpunkt der Rückfahrt aus den Niederlanden dem Kaiserlich Deutschen Gesandten im Haag mitzuteilen ist.

(6) dass ein Verstoss gegen diese Vorschriften sowie gegen die übernommenen Verpflichtungen jedes Recht auf die Vorzugsbehandlung verwirkt.

Das Auswärtige Amt darf die Botschaft ergebenst bitten, das Erforderliche zu veranlassen, damit die Ausweise entsprechend den vorstehenden Ausführungen abgefasst werden.

BERLIN, den 24. Dezember 1914

An die Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika

[5]

Letter,[4] *31 December 1914,* ZIMMERMANN TO GERARD, *stating that the Governor-General in Belgium will issue an order prohibiting the troops from requisitioning food or forage which would have to be replaced by importations by the C.R.B.* (Document 321, chapter viii, is an English translation of this letter)

[6]

German safe-conduct pass, 6 February 1915, issued to ships used by the C.R.B. (Document 197, chapter v, is an English translation of this type of safe-conduct pass)

[7]

Letter, 15 February 1915, GERMAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON TO C.R.B. NEW YORK, *recommending that in view of the German "war zone" declaration C.R.B. ships take the northern route to Rotterdam* (Document 198, chapter v, gives the text of this letter)

[4] The important alteration in this guarantee from those previously given by the Governor-General is brought out in chapter viii, Documents 319 and 320.

[8] DOCUMENT NO. 603

"Note Verbale," 5 March 1915, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE TO THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *refusing to issue passes for C.R.B. ships from Rotterdam to England, but stating that German submarines have been instructed to permit the undisturbed passage through the English channel of distinctly marked C.R.B. vessels*

(A letter of the same date and of similar content from VON JAGOW to GERARD appears in translation as Document 202, chapter v)

Auswärtiges Amt
Abschrift (Aug. 2)
Nr. III a 4960
28800

VERBALNOTE

Der Vorsitzende der Relief Commission für Belgien, Herr Hoover, hat angeregt, den Schiffen der Commission für ihre Fahrten von Rotterdam nach England und zurück deutsche Geleitscheine auszustellen.

Wegen der im Kriegsgebiet bestehenden Minengefahr ist die Deutsche Regierung zu ihrem lebhaften Bedauern ausser Stande, dieser Anregung zu entsprechen. Im Hinblick auf das menschenfreundliche Werk der Relief Commission sind indessen die deutschen Unterseeboote angewiesen worden, die Schiffe der Commission auch auf dem Wege durch den englischen Kanal ungestört fahren zu lassen, falls diese an den üblichen Abzeichen—in grossen Buchstaben auf den Schiffsseiten aufgemalte Bezeichnung und weisse Flagge mit gleicher Bezeichnung in roten Buchstaben—erkennbar und die Abzeichen auch bei Nacht deutlich sichtbar beleuchtet sind. Die Deutsche Regierung muss dabei selbstverständlich voraussetzen, dass alle Mittel angewendet werden, um einen Missbrauch der Abzeichen der Relief Commission auszuschliessen.

Das Auswärtige Amt beehrt sich hiernach die Vermittelung der Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika in Anspruch zu nehmen, um eine Erklärung von seiten der Britischen Regierung herbeizuführen, die sicherstellt, dass nur diejenigen Schiffe die Abzeichen der Relief Commission führen dürfen, die tatsächlich im Dienste der Commission stehen.

BERLIN, den 5. März 1915

An die Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika

[9]

Letter, 18 April 1915, VON JAGOW TO GERARD, *stating that safe-conduct passes will be issued to C.R.B. vessels to return to English ports* (Document 206, chapter v, is an English translation of this letter)

[10] DOCUMENT NO. 604

Letter, 19 April 1915, German Legation at The Hague to C.R.B. Rotterdam, *stating that authorization has been given to assure the safe return of C.R.B. ships to English ports*

Kaiserlich Deutsche Gesandtschaft in
den Niederlanden
J. No. 2502

Haag, den 19. April, 1915

Der Commission for Relief in Belgium beehrt sich der unterzeichnete Kaiserliche Gesandte mitzuteilen, dass er ermächtigt worden ist, ihren Schiffen unter den bisher üblichen Bedingungen und in der bisher üblichen Form sichere Rückfahrt nach englischen Häfen zuzusichern, vorausgesetzt dass ihr Charter dies verlangt und dass sie keine Ladung für England nehmen.

Er gestattet sich nochmals darauf hinzuweisen, dass im Interesse der Sicherheit der Schiffe bei Tage und bei Nacht klar erkennbare Abzeichen dringend nötig sind.

Der Kaiserliche Gesandte
(s) v. Kühlmann

An die Commission for Relief in Belgium,
Rotterdam

[11] DOCUMENT NO. 605

Letter, 1 May 1915, von Jagow to Gerard, *consenting to the issuance of safe-conduct passes to cargoes bought afloat by the C.R.B.*

Auswärtiges Amt
Nr. II. W. K. Be. 663
58762

Berlin, 1. Mai 1915

Der Unterzeichnete beehrt sich, Seiner Exzellenz dem Botschafter der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika Herrn James W. Gerard auf das Schreiben vom 21. v.M.—F.O.Nr.3127—zu erwidern, dass die Kaiserliche Regierung gern bereit ist, den Schiffen, die von der Hilfskommission schwimmend gekaufte Ladung führen, für die Fahrt von Falmouth nach Rotterdam jedesmal einen Geleitschein zu erteilen, wenn diese Schiffe lediglich Ladung für die Hilfskommission an Bord haben und mit bei Tag und Nacht klar erkennbaren Abzeichen der Kommission versehen sind.

Die Geleitscheine würden von der von hier aus verständigten Kaiserlichen Gesandtschaft im Haag auszustellen und dem Rotterdamer Vertreter der Hilfskommission zur Weiterleitung zu übergeben sein.

Der Unterzeichnete benutzt den Anlass, um Seiner Exzellenz dem

Herrn Botschafter den Ausdruck seiner ausgezeichnetsten Hochachtung zu erneuern.

(Signed) VON JAGOW

Seiner Exzellenz
dem Botschafter der Vereinigten
Staaten von Amerika
Herrn James W. Gerard

[12] DOCUMENT NO. 606

"Note Verbale," 9 December 1916, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE TO EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *regarding negotiations for securing safe-conducts for Commission vessels from the Argentine*

Auswärtiges Amt
II U 5507
207894

VERBALNOTE

Das Auswärtige Amt beehrt sich, der Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika auf die gefälligen Verbalnoten vom 31. Oktober d.J.—F.O. 13987—und 23. v.M.—F.O. 14460 folgendes zu erwidern:

1. Zu Ziffer 1 des mit der gefälligen Verbalnote vom 23.v.M. übersandten Memorandums erklärt sich die Kaiserliche Regierung damit einverstanden, dass für Ladungen von Argentinien nach Rotterdam, die angekauft sind, *bevor* das Schiff in See geht, nur die Amerikanische Botschaft in Buenos Aires dem Kaiserlichen Gesandten daselbst die Unterlagen für die Ausstellung des Geleitscheines liefert. Dabei würde in diesem Falle kein Unterschied zu machen sein zwischen neutralen und nicht neutralen Schiffen. Die Argentinische Regierung hat nach einer der Kaiserlichen Gesandtschaft im Haag von dem Leiter der Commission for Relief in Belgium in Rotterdam gemachten Mitteilung die Ausstellung der bisher ausserdem geforderten Garantieerklärung trotz der Befürwortung seitens der Regierung der Vereinigten Staaten verweigert. Nach der dortseitigen Verbalnote vom 31. Oktober d.J. hat aber auch die Regierung der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika sich ausser Stande erklärt, die Amerikanische Botschaft in Buenos Aires zur Ausstellung der erforderlichen Garantieerklärung zu ermächtigen.

Es darf daher zunächst um eine gefällige Äusserung gebeten werden, ob die Amerikanische Regierung unter den vorliegenden Umständen bereit ist, ihre vorbezeichnete Haltung im Sinne der Anregung der Commission for Relief in Belgium zu ändern.

2. Der Vorschlag zu 2 des vorbezeichneten Memorandums, Schiffen, deren Ladung *nach* Verlassen des argentinischen Hafens gekauft ist, in St. Vincent einen Passierschein auszustellen, lässt sich nicht verwirklichen, da in St. Vincent, einer feindlichen Kolonie, zurzeit kein deutscher Konsul vorhanden ist, und unter keinen Umständen darauf verzichtet werden kann, dass der Geleitschein von einer *deutschen* Behörde ausgestellt wird. Die Kaiserliche Regierung beehrt sich aber, den Gegenvorschlag zu machen, solche Schiffe Las Palmas anlaufen zu lassen und ihnen dort durch den Kaiserlichen Konsul einen Geleitschein geben zu lassen. Die Unterlagen für den Geleit-

schein könnten, wie in Buenos Aires, auch nach Las Palmas durch amerikanische Vermittlung gegeben werden.

Sicherheit *vor* dem Erreichen von Las Palmas kann den Schiffen, deren Ladung unterwegs angekauft wird, nicht gewährleistet werden. Sie würden selbstverständlich von Las Palmas ab die vorgeschriebenen Abzeichen der Kommission zu führen haben.

3. Die Ausstellung von Geleitscheinen für leer zurückkehrende Schiffe im Sinne der Ziffer 3 des mehrerwähnten Memorandums kann nur in Frage kommen für solche Schiffe, die für lange Zeit, d.h. unter allen Umständen noch über die Rückreise hinaus, im Dienste der Commission for Relief in Belgium stehen. Voraussetzung wäre die Garantie, dass die Schiffe tatsächlich *ohne* Ladung dahin gehen, wo sie ihre neue Ladung nehmen sollen.

Zum Schluss darf darauf hingewiesen werden, dass sich die Kaiserliche Regierung den jederzeitigen Widerruf jeder Garantie aus militärischen Gründen vorbehalten muss.

BERLIN, den 9. Dezember 1916

An die Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika

[13] DOCUMENT NO. 607

Instructions, 1 February 1917, GENERAL GOVERNMENT IN BELGIUM TO C.R.B. AND PROTECTING MINISTERS, *regarding danger to C.R.B. vessels in view of unrestricted submarine warfare*

ROTTERDAM, 1 February 1917

Relief Commission
London

This morning the governing authorities called in conference the Protecting Ministers and ourselves and gave us following message:

"It goes without saying that the Imperial Government has no intention whatsoever of standing in the way of the humanitarian work of the ravitaillement of Belgium, but the Imperial Government must insist that the C.R.B. will send its ships outside of the forbidden zone. It is understood that ships which find themselves on the first of February in the forbidden zone can leave the zone by taking the most direct route without fearing unlooked-for attacks and that the ships which find themselves in English ports can leave them, up to the evening of February 4th and can traverse forbidden zone by the most direct route. Nevertheless the C.R.B. is instructed in the most pressing manner to turn by immediate advice, all ships on route toward the routes situated outside of the forbidden zone. The ships which do not follow such instructions will navigate at their own risk and peril."

Ministers have sent urgent appeals to their respective governments, but you must give immediate notice ships on route as above outlined. Shall remain in Rotterdam until Sunday.

(Signed) GREGORY
Relief Commission

[14]

Memorandum, 2 February 1917, German Embassy at Washington to the C.R.B. New York, *stating regulations affecting C.R.B. shipping under the German unrestricted submarine policy* (Document 227, chapter v, gives the text of this memorandum)

[15] DOCUMENT NO. 608

Note, 4 February 1917, German Legation at The Hague to C.R.B. Rotterdam, *closing English ports to C.R.B. ships and limiting access to Rotterdam to the northern route*

Note From Baron von Stumm[5]

1. Relief Schiffe welche hier sind können nicht in Barry Docks kohlen.
2. Schiffe die in England sind sollen heute sofort abfahren.
3. Alle Schiffe die in diesen Tagen abfahren dürfen nicht mehr durch das Sperrgebiet.
4. Relief Commission Schiffe können nicht mehr nach England fahren nur noch Holland Raddampfer.

[16] DOCUMENT NO. 609

Letter, 18 February 1917, Zimmermann to Spanish Ambassador in Berlin, *expressing the desire that relief work be continued, that the American delegates remain and stating that guarantees will in any case be continued*

Auswärtiges Amt
Nr. II U 657

26466

Berlin, le 18 février 1917

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

En réponse à la lettre du 8 de ce mois—No. Reg. 2326—que Votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser, j'ai l'honneur de vous communiquer ce qui suit:

Comme j'ai déjà eu l'honneur de Vous exprimer par ma lettre du 18 de ce mois—II U 642—le Gouvernement Impérial est également animé du vif désir que l'oeuvre humanitaire de la Commission de Secours aux Belges soit maintenue. Quoique le Gouvernement des Etats-Unis d'Amérique ait rompu les rélations diplomatiques avec l'Allemagne, l'oeuvre du ravitaillement, basée sur les Conventions

[5] Transmitted by Rotterdam office to London, February 4, 1917.

conclues en même temps avec le Gouvernement d'Espagne et avec celui des Pays-Bas, pourra continuer évidemment son activité bienfaisante. Le Gouvernement Impérial n'a nullement l'intention d'engager les membres de la Commission à suspendre leurs travaux et à quitter les territoires occupés. Il croit au contraire qu'il serait utile que ces Messieurs restent provisoirement à leurs postes, tout en considérant la possibilité de leur emplacement, le cas échéant par d'autres agents neutres propres à ces fonctions. De plus rien ne s'oppose à ce que quelques-uns des membres américains restent à Bruxelles à la direction de la Commission.

En vue de régler la question, des négociations ont été entamées par le Gouvernement Général en Belgique directement avec les Ministres Protecteurs de la Commission. Ces négociations ont eu pour résultat que les Américains resteront en fonction jusqu'à nouvel ordre, la question de l'entrée d'autres agents neutres dans la Commission, pour les assister d'abord et les remplacer dans la suite, étant toutefois réservée.

Le Ministre des Etats-Unis M. Whitlock et le Secrétaire de la Légation M. Ruddock se sont déjà déclarés prêts à continuer leur activité à Bruxelles comme personnes privées.

Dans l'espoir que ces measures assureront la continuation de l'oeuvre de Secours sans entrave, je saisis cette occasion pour Vous renouveler, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, les assurances de ma très haute considération.

(Signé) ZIMMERMANN

Está conforme

A Son Excellence Monsieur Luis Polo de Bernabé
Ambassadeur d'Espagne

[17]

Letter, 18 February 1917, ZIMMERMANN TO SPANISH AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN, *limiting safe-conducts for C.R.B. steamers from America to those taking the northern route to Rotterdam and prohibiting shipments from England except by the paddle-wheel boats* (Document 232, chapter v, is an English translation of the following)

Auswärtiges Amt
Nr. II U 642 I
26061

BERLIN, le 18 février 1917

MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR:

En réponse aux lettres du 8 et 13 de ce mois Nr. Reg. 2328, 2368 et 2369—que Votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser, j'ai l'honneur de Vous assurer que le Gouvernment Impérial est profondement reconnaissant du grand intérêt que Sa Majesté le Roi daigne témoigner à l'oeuvre humanitaire de la Commission de Secours aux Belges

et ne manque pas d'apprécier la haute valeur de Son précieux appui. Aussi le Gouvernement attache-t-il une importance particulière à ce que l'oeuvre du ravitaillement de la Belgique et du territoire français occupé ne soit pas interrompue.

Or cette continuation désirée de toute part n'est nullement entravée par la Proclamation de la zone de guerre du 31 janvier dernier.

1. En effet à coté de cette proclamation un répit s'étendant jusqu'au 13 février avait été fixé pour les bateaux neutres traversant la zone de guerre de l'Atlantique et du canal de la Manche. Les navires de la Commission se trouvant en route auront eu par conséquent assez de temps pour arriver aux ports de destination, ou bien ils auront eu connaissance de la Proclamation de la zone de guerre avant leur départ. Les navires se trouvant encore en haute mer seront obligés de prendre leurs cours au nord des îles Shetland en dehors de la zone de guerre. Le libre transit à travers cette zone, spécialement par le canal de la Manche, ne saurait être concédé, à mon vif regret, pour des raisons militaires, d'autant plus que les Alliés pourraient abuser de cette faveur pour leurs propres fins.

2. Quant aux navires se trouvant encore dans des ports anglais, il leur aurait été possible de quitter les ports jusqu'au répit du 5 février, s'ils n'en avaient pas été empêchés par le Gouvernement Britannique. Cependant le Gouvernement Impérial Vous prie de lui fournir un relevé détaillé des navires dont il s'agit et des ports où ils se trouvent à présent.

3. Des sauf-conduits ne pourront être délivrés à l'avenir qu'à la condition que les bateaux prennent leurs cours au nord des îles Shetland en dehors de la zone de guerre où aucun danger des opérations de la marine allemande ne les menace.

4. Les vivres achétés par la Commission en Angleterre ne pourront être expédiés qu'à Vlissingen par les bateaux à roues hollandais auxquels une licence spéciale a été accordée.

5. Pour rendre le charbonnage possible aux bateaux de la Commission, de l'houille belge leur sera fournie à Rotterdam.

Le Gouvernement Impérial est persuadé qu'il n'échappera pas à la perspicacité du Gouvernement Royal que d'autres concessions aux désirs du comité de secours seraient incompatibles avec les mesures militaires allemandes dictées par les circonstances actuelles. Il se remet surtout à l'éminent jugement militaire de Sa Majesté le Roi qui certainement ne refusera pas de connaitre la justice des vues exprimées plus haut. Le Gouvernement Impérial espère par conséquent que Votre Auguste Souverain et Son Gouvernement continueront à prêter leurs secours efficaces à l'oeuvre humanitaire dans les conditions créées par l'état de guerre.

Je saisis aussi cette occasion pour Vous renouveler, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, les assurances de ma très haute considération.

(Signé) ZIMMERMANN

Està conforme

A Son Excellence Monsieur Luis Polo de Bernabé
Ambassadeur d'Espagne

[18]

Letter, 12 March 1917, VON DER LANCKEN TO VILLALOBAR, *consenting to safe-conducts to American representatives whenever applied for, whatsoever the situation may be between Germany and the United States* (Document 492, chapter xii, is an English translation of the following)

Abschrift

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien
V. 2770

BRUXELLES, le 12 mars 1917

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

Répondant à la lettre que Votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser le 6 mars dernier, concernant les membres de la Commission for Relief in Belgium, j'ai l'honneur de lui faire savoir que Monsieur le Gouverneur Général a consenti à ce qu'un sauf-conduit soit en tous cas délivré aux membres américains de la C.R.B. désignés dans l'annexe de la susdite lettre lorsque ceux-ci en feraient la demande et quelle que soit la situation dans laquelle se trouvent à ce moment vis-à-vis l'une de l'autre l'Allemagne et les Etats-Unis d'Amérique. Toutefois une quarantaine d'une durée n'excédant pas quatre semaines sera nécessaire avant leur départ pour satisfaire aux intérêts militaires.

Je prie Votre Excellence de bien vouloir porter ce qui précède à la connaissance de la Commission for Relief in Belgium et je profite de l'occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurance de ma haute considération.

(gez.) LANCKEN

A Son Excellence le Marquis de Villalobar
Ministre de Sa Majesté le Roi d'Espagne
Bruxelles

[19] DOCUMENT NO. 610

Letter, 12 March 1917, GERMAN LEGATION AT THE HAGUE TO C.R.B. ROTTERDAM, *stating that the lane between the danger zones for access to Rotterdam can be considered absolutely safe from submarines after the 15th March*

Kaiserlich
Deutsche Gesandtschaft

B 1551

HAAG, den 12. März 1917

Ich beehre mich, mitzuteilen, dass vom 15. d. M. ab die von der Deutschen Regierung durch Veränderung des Sperrgebiets vom 4.

Februar d. J. freigegebene Fahrrinne in der Nordsee als absolut sicher bezüglich der Angriffe von Unterseebooten zu betrachten ist.

DER KAISERLICHE GESANDTE
Im Auftrage

(S.) VON STUMM

An die Commission for Relief
in Belgium
Rotterdam

[20] DOCUMENT NO. 611

Letter, 13 March 1917, GERMAN LEGATION AT THE HAGUE TO C.R.B. ROTTERDAM, *stating all submarines at sea after the 15th March will be fully instructed regarding the safety of the North Sea channel to Rotterdam*

Kaiserlich
Deutsche Gesandtschaft
B 1620
3 Anlagen

HAAG, den 13. März 1917

Alle nach dem 15. März in See befindlichen Unterseeboote haben die Instruktion wegen der Sicherheit der Fahrstrasse in der Nordsee.

Da damit die Lage *ausserhalb* des Sperrgebiets genau dieselbe ist, wie vor dem 1. Februar d. J. ist auch eine weitere Erklärung auf den Geleitscheinen nicht notwendig, zu der übrigens die Kaiserliche Gesandtschaft eventuell auch erst einer Ermächtigung aus Berlin bedürfte.

DER KAISERLICHE GESANDTE
Im Auftrage

(S) VON STUMM

An die Commission for Relief
in Belgium
Rotterdam

[21] DOCUMENT NO. 612

Letter, 20 March 1917, SWISS LEGATION LONDON TO C.R.B., *announcing that the German Government has consented that the Swiss Legation at Washington and the Consul General at Montreal may issue safe-conducts for C.R.B. ships*

SWISS LEGATION, LONDON,
March 20th 1917

DEAR MR. POLAND:

The Swiss Minister desires me to inform you that according to telegraphic information from the Swiss Government, the German Government have given their consent to safe conducts to be issued by the Swiss Legation at Washington and by the Consul General at

Montreal to the supply ships of your Commission. These ships coming from America must sail north the Schettlands Islands and must avoid the Channel and all the areas lying within the German blockade limit.

M. Carlin has brought this to the knowledge of the Foreign Office.

Believe me, dear Mr. Poland,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) C. R. PARAVICINI

[22] DOCUMENT NO. 613

Telegram, 22 March 1917, C.R.B. ROTTERDAM TO C.R.B. LONDON, *quoting agreement of Germans that C.R.B. cargoes in English ports may leave on the 1st May but with conditions*[6]

ROTTERDAM, 22 March 1917

Relief Commission
London

Brussels wires: Wednesday. Received today following letter from governing authorities:

"With reference to our letter No. 10853 February 24th, 1917, you are respectfully informed that the Imperial Government agrees to let all steamers of the Belgian Relief Commission being in English ports leave on May 1st, 1917, and pass the blockaded waters secure against attacks on ways which are still to be determined and this under the following conditions:

1. The Relief Commission must inform by April 10th in a binding manner:

a) whether England agrees with the departure on May 1st of ships with cargoes;

b) what are the ships (name and sign of distinction) which are willing to make use of the offer of departure and where the ships are located.

2. The routes which will have to be followed by the ships shall be indicated by the German Government as soon as an answer to 1 will be given. The attention is called to the fact that security against danger of mines may not be given even on May 1st.

It is suggested that the above be transmitted to the knowledge of C.R.B. London, and that the desired declarations be asked for as soon as possible so that the relief ships being in English ports may soon be given the opportunity to proceed on their return journey with security."

German authorities would appreciate any light that can be thrown upon the reason which compelled "Storstad" to apparently be in forbidden zone when she was torpedoed. Suggest to take up immediately question of ships in English ports so that plan can be fully settled before April 10th.

RELIEF COMMISSION

[6] The conditions were not acceptable to the British Foreign Office. These cargoes were eventually sold in England on Government orders. See chapter v, Documents 234 to 237.

[23] DOCUMENT NO. 614

Verbal Note, 31 March 1917, GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE TO SPANISH EMBASSY BERLIN, *agreeing to provide safe-conducts for C.R.B. cargoes from the Argentine and inclosing instructions to German representatives in Buenos Aires and Las Palmas*

FOREIGN OFFICE, BERLIN
31 March 1917

VERBAL NOTE

In answer to the note of February 27, ultimo—No. Reg. 2477. Belgian Affairs—which has crossed the verbal note of this Department of February 28th, ultimo—No. II U 728, treating the same matter, the Department of Foreign Affairs has the honor to inform the Royal Embassy that the Imperial Government consents to its propositions concerning safe-conducts for the boats of the Commission for Relief to Belgians coming from Argentine or touching Las Palmas with a cargo bought during the traveling.

As to the particulars, the Imperial Department has the honor to refer to the memorandum annexed to its verbal note of February 28th ultimo II U 728—and to the instructions to the Imperial Legation at Buenos Aires and to the Imperial Vice Consulate at Las Palmas, of which copies are attached hereafter.

The Foreign Office especially calls attention to the fact that for the ships which have on board cargoes bought en route, no security before their arrival at Las Palmas can be guaranteed.

In view of the present postal difficulties, the Imperial Department would be grateful to the Royal Government to transmit the letters with enclosed annexes, to their destination at Buenos Aires and at Las Palmas.

[*Translation*]

[24]

Letter, 15 June 1917, ZIMMERMANN TO BERNABÉ, *stating the German Government's approval of the new arrangements for relief* (Document 506, chapter xii, is an English translation of the following)

Auswärtiges Amt
Nr. II U 1928

86543

BERLIN, le 15 juin, 1917

A Son Excellence
M. Polo de Bernabé
Ambassadeur d'Espagne

MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR,

En reponse à la lettre que Votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser le 31 mai dernier, Affaires Belges, No: Reg. L3198, j'ai l'honneur de Vous informer que M. le Gouverneur Général de Belgique a donné son assentiment aux propositions contenues dans la note concernant l'organisation de la "Commission for Relief in Belgium" et du nouveau "Comité Neutre pour la Protection du Ravitaillement" que

Messieurs les Ministres Protecteurs ont adressée à Monsieur le Baron von der Lancken Wakenitz le 1er mai. dr.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, l'assurance de ma très haute considération.

(signé) ZIMMERMANN

[25] DOCUMENT NO. 615

Conference, 29 August 1917, between GENERAL GOVERNMENT, C.R.B., AND DUTCH COAL MERCHANTS, *concerning arrangements for furnishing Belgian coal in Rotterdam for C.R.B. ships*

Der Delegierte
des
General-Gouverneurs in Belgien
bei der
Kaiserlich Deutschen Gesandtschaft
in den Niederlanden

Tagebuch B/D Nr. 10935
B Anlage

HAAG, den 29. August 1917

Betr. Bunkerkohle für die C.R.B.

Unter Bezugnahme auf die Besprechung von heute Morgen wird anbei die vereinbarte Aufzeichnung überreicht mit der Bitte, sie morgen Herrn Direktor Frowein, wie verabredet, zwecks Gegenzeichnung zu unterbreiten und freundlichst hierher zurückzugeben.

(gez.) DR. BEHRENS

HAAG, den 29. August 1917

Besprechung über deutsche Bunkerkohle für die C.R.B.—Dampfer im Büro von Dr. Behrens am 29. August 1917.

Teilnehmer:

HERREN GEHEIMRAT GNEIST, {Handelsbeirat der Kaiserlich Deutschen Gesandtschaft

DR. MELCHIOR,

DR. BEHRENS, Delegierter des General-Gouverneurs in Belgien,

J. W. VAN BEUNINGEN, Steenkolen-Handelsvereeniging,

J. VAN DER SLUIS, Commission for Relief,

DE BARY, bei dem Delegierten

DR. MOLTMANN, bei dem Handelsbeirat.

Es besteht Einverständnis über die folgenden Punkte:

1. Die Kohlenausfuhrstelle West erteilt dem Rheinisch-Westfälischen Kohlensyndikat ab 1. September 1917 monatlich Ausfuhrbewilligungen bis zu 12.000 tons Bunkerkohlen zur Lieferung an die Commission for Relief, Rotterdam.

2. Die für die C.R.B. angeführten Kohlen werden unabhängig von dem holländischen Kohlenkontingent geliefert.

3. Die C.R.B. hat durch Vermittlung der Steenkolen-Handelsvereeniging hier für ihre Schiffe einen Bestand von Bunkerkohle angelegt, der gegenwärtig rund 9.000 t beträgt. Sie ist berechtigt, aus den monatlichen Zufuhren diesen Bestand bis auf 12.000 Tonnen aufzufüllen und in dieser Höhe zu halten.

4. Die Rijkskolendistributie erkennt grundsätzlich an, dass mit deutschem Einverständnis über die unter dieser Abmachung gelieferte Kohle nur die C.R.B. Rotterdam für ihrem Gebrauch verfügen kann.

Sollte indessen die Rijkskolendistributie den Wunsch haben, in dringenden Ausnahmefällen über Einzelpartien zu verfügen, so soll dies einverstanden sein, sofern gleichwertiger Ersatz unverzüglich gestellt wird.

5. Es ist einverstanden, dass der von der Steenkolenhandelsvereeniging unter Beitritt der Rijkskolendistributie mit der Commission for Relief, Brüssel, am 14. April 1917 geschlossene Vertrag erloschen ist.

Die Kontrolle über die richtige Ausführung der vorstehenden Abmachung wird von dem Delegierten des General-Gouverneurs etc. ausgeübt werden.

[26] DOCUMENT NO. 616

Letter, 17 May 1918, General Government in Belgium to C.R.B. Brussels, *stating that the German Government have agreed to furnish safe-conducts at Bergen for cargoes bought afloat by the C.R.B.*

Abschrift

Politische Abteilung
beim
Generalgouverneur in Belgien
J. No. V. 5197

Brüssel, den 17. Mai 1918

Mit Rücksicht auf die Bestrebungen der Commission for Relief in Belgium, dem jetzigen Getreidemangel dadurch abzuhelfen, dass nach anderen Häfen unterwegs befindliche Schiffe mit Lebensmitteln auf telegraphischem Wege durch die C.R.B. gechartert und über Bergen nach Rotterdam abgelenkt werden sollen, ist die Kaiserliche Regierung von hier aus gebeten worden, ihre Zustimmung hierzu zu erteilen und die entsprechenden Massnahmen für die Ausstellung von Geleitscheinen an solche Schiffe zu treffen.

Nach einem telegraphischen Bescheide hat sich die Kaiserliche Regierung mit vorstehendem Antrage einverstanden erklärt. Die Erteilung der Geleitscheine wird durch den Marine-Attaché bei der Kaiserlich Deutschen Gesandtschaft in Kristiania erfolgen. Die Einzelheiten über die in Betracht kommenden Schiffe würden in jedem Falle seitens der Kaiserlichen Gesandtschaft im Haag, welche seitens der C.R.B. in Rotterdam entsprechend zu unterrichten wäre, an die Kaiserliche Gesandtschaft in Kristiania mitzuteilen sein.

Da die Instruktionen der deutschen Seestreitkräfte diesen Fall der Geleitscheinerteilung nicht enthalten, kann eine unbedingte

Sicherheit für die freie Fahrt nicht vor Ablauf von drei Monanten übernommen werden.

Es darf gebeten werden, Vorstehendes der C.R.B. in Rotterdam zur Kenntnis bringen zu wollen.

(gez.) RIETH

An
die Commission for Relief in Belgium
Brüssel

[27] DOCUMENT NO. 617

Declaration, 18 October 1918, GERMAN LEGATION AT THE HAGUE TO DUTCH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, *that safe-conduct passes are valid also for refugee supplies*

Kaiserlich Deutsche
Gesandtschaft

DEN HAAG, den 18. Oktober 1918

ERKLAERUNG

Die Kaiserlich Deutsche Gesandtschaft beehrt sich, das Koeniglich Niederlaendische Ministerium der Auswaertigen Angelegenheiten dahin zu benachrichtigen, dass die deutscherseits fuer Dampfer der Commission for Relief in Belgium ausgefertigten Geleitscheine auch fuer diejenigen Waren Gueltigkeit haben sollen, welche nach Loeschung in Rotterdam fuer die Versorgung der neuerdings in Holland erwarteten Fluechtlinge aus Belgien und Nordfrankreich hier im Lande verbraucht werden.

DER KAISERLICHE GESANDTE
IM AUFTRAGE
(z.) MALTZAN

2. *Guarantees in the General Government Zone in Belgium. 1914–1918*

A majority of the documents in this group relate to the privileged status of the supplies for relief. The most important are the guarantees of the immunity of imported supplies and the local harvest from military requisition or for any purpose except for the benefit of the Belgian people. Besides these fundamental undertakings there are others relating to various details of handling and distribution—customs duties, the use of canal boats and tugs, freight charges, the privileges of C.R.B. delegates and local relief officials to make inspection trips in certain zones. These are by no means all the guarantees of this general category issued by the Germans, but they include the most important and illustrate the variety of matters which were affected.

The guarantees varied in origin as in subject matter; some were formal statements by the Governor-General; some

were decrees and others letters or memoranda from department officials. They were addressed to the Patron Ministers, to the Comité National, and to the C.R.B. After April 1916 when the Governor-General established the Vermittlungsstelle[7] as a special department of the German Government in Belgium to handle relief matters, much of the confusion and competition among German departments for authority in relief affairs disappeared. The Vermittlungsstelle became the channel through which the relief organizations secured new German undertakings. The more important questions, however, were handled as before by formal communications between the Governor-General and the Patron Ministers.

[28] DOCUMENT NO. 618

Letter, 19 September 1914, VON LÜTTWITZ TO SHALER, *agreeing to furnish passes for imported relief provisions*

Militäir-Gouverneur
von Brüssel

den 19ten September 1914

Herrn Millard King Shaler
Hochwohlgeboren
Brüssel

Der Transport von Lebensmitteln, die für die Verpflegung der armen Brüsseler Bevölkerung dienen sollen, wird hierdurch grundsätzlich genehmigt. Ich mache aber darauf aufmerksam, dass während der Dauer militärischer Operationen innerhalb Belgiens die Benutzung der Kanäle ausgeschlossen, die Benutzung von Autos gefährlich und der Transport mittels Eisenbahn unter Umständen nur mit Verzögerung möglich ist.

Ich bin bereit, Ihnen Bescheinigungen, die als Ausweise für Ihre Lebensmitteltransporte dienen sollen, in der vorgeschlagenen Form zu unterstempeln. Sie wollen deshalb gefälligst sich derartige Formulare in der erforderlichen Zahl drucken lassen und zur Abstempelung hierher reichen.

(Sgd.) VON LÜTTWITZ
General-Major

[29]

Letter, 17 September 1914, VON DER GOLTZ TO WHITLOCK, *agreeing that the German Government will not requisition supplies destined for the Belgian civil population* (Document 1, chapter i, is an English translation of this letter)

[7] See chapter ii, Documents 43 to 45.

[30]

Letter, 16 October 1914, von der Goltz to the Comité Central, *guaranteeing freedom from requisition of imported foodstuffs of all kinds* (Document 7, chapter i, is an English translation of the following)

General-Gouvernement in Belgien

Brüssel, den 16. Oktober 1914

Auf die sehr gefällige Zuschrift vom heutigen Tage beehre ich mich ganz ergebenst zu erwidern, dass ich das Unternehmen des Comité Central de Secours et d'Alimentation mit lebhafter Genugtuung begrüsse und kein Bedenken trage, hiermit ausdrücklich und förmlich die Versicherung zu geben, dass die zur Ernährung der Zivilbevölkerung von Belgien seitens des Komitees eingeführten Lebensmittel aller Art ausschliesslich für die Bedürfnisse der Bevölkerung Belgiens vorbehalten sind, dass diesselben demnach von der Requisition seitens der Militärbehörden frei sein sollen und endlich, dass dieselben zur ausschliesslichen Verfügung des Komitees verbleiben.

Frh. v. d. Goltz,
Generalfeldmarschall

[31] DOCUMENT NO. 619

Certificate, 29 October 1914, from General Government, protecting relief provisions and canal boats transporting them from requisition

Bescheinigung

Brüssel, den 29. Oktober 1914

Die Gesandtschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika in Brüssel ist berechtigt Lebensmittel von Holland nach Brüssel auf dem Wasserweg via Antwerpen befördern zu lassen.

Lebensmittel sowie die Fahrzeuge sind vor Requisitionen zu schützen.

Gültig bis Ende November 1914.

General-Gouvernement in Belgien
Der Oberquartiermeister
(S.) Scherenberg

[32] DOCUMENT NO. 620

Letter, 5 November 1914, Commissioner for Banks to the Société Générale, *authorizing the use of its London funds to finance food imports*

Brussels, 5 November 1914

To the Société Générale
of Belgium
Brussels

Gentlemen:

In reply to your verbal request I inform you that you can be authorized to draw on your credit in the banks of London, but exclu-

sively for the purposes of assuring the financial service of the importations of foodstuffs into Belgium.

Your drafts should be issued in such a way that you will place the necessary sums in pounds at the disposal of the Spanish-American Committee constituted for the importation of the foodstuffs. Each individual draft, to be valid, must be countersigned by one of the commissioners delegated for your institution.

(Signed) VON LUMM
Commissioner for Banks in Belgium

[*Translation*]

[33]

Letter, 14 November 1914, VON DER GOLTZ TO WHITLOCK, *declaring that imported relief supplies will be devoted exclusively to the civil population and that the army will discontinue requisitions of local produce* (Document 316, chapter viii, is an English translation of this letter)

[34] DOCUMENT NO. 621

Statement, 16 November 1914, by the GENERAL GOVERNMENT TO THE PROVINCIAL AND ETAPE AUTHORITIES, *describing the relief organization and confirming the guarantees against requisition of imported supplies*

Der
Verwaltungschef bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Geschäftsnummer 5 à 212

BRÜSSEL, den 16. November 1914

Auf Wunsch des Comité Central de Secours et d'Alimentation, Brüssel, rue de Naples 48, Telephon No. 140, das wie bekannt damit betraut ist, die belgische Zivilbevölkerung mit Brotfrucht, Salz und anderen Lebensmitteln, Kleidungsstücken sowie später vielleicht auch mit Petroleum zu versorgen, beehre ich mich, folgendes mitzuteilen:

1. Das Zentralkomitee steht unter dem Ehrenschutz des hiesigen spanischen und amerikanischen Gesandten. Die englische Regierung hat auf deren Intervention zugelassen, dass für das Zentralkomitee Brotgetreide aus England und Amerika auf neutralen Schiffen nach neutralen Häfen (und zwar zunächst nach Rotterdam) befördert werden unter der Bedingung, dass die Sendungen an den amerikanischen Gesandten in Brüssel gerichtet, und dass die Getreidevorräte lediglich zur Versorgung der belgischen Zivilbevölkerung verwendet werden.

Diese Zusicherung und die aus ihr folgende Befreiung der in den Mühlen und den Depots des Comités sowie auf dem Transport (Wasser- Schienenweg und Landweg) befindlichen und durch eine Abschrift kenntlichen Vorräte von jeglicher militärischer Requisition hat der Herr General-Gouverneur dem amerikanischen und spanischen Gesandten ausdrücklich und förmlich gegeben. Diese Zusiche-

rung ist sinngemäss auch auf alle zur Linderung der Not der belgischen Zivilbevölkerung eingeführten Sachen zu erstrecken.

2. Die Heranführung der in Rotterdam eintreffenden Getreidemengen erfolgt auf Anweisung eines in Rotterdam bestehenden Zweiges des von dem amerikanischen Kapitän Lucey geleiteten Komitees, das die Getreidemengen entweder unter Benutzung der Schiffahrt nach Antwerpen und von dort entweder mit der Eisenbahn oder auf dem Kanalwege in die belgischen Mühlen und Depots, oder unter Benutzung der holländischen Bahnlinien und unter Weiterführung auf den angrenzenden belgischen Linien abführt. Die Depots stehen unter amerikanischem Schutze und werden von einem amerikanischen Staatsangehörigen verwaltet. Die Zuführung des Getreides von Rotterdam seitens aller in Betracht kommenden Verkehrsbehörden wird in jeder Weise zu fördern sein. Ich bitte daher den in Betracht kommenden Verkehrsbehörden entsprechende Anweisungen zugehen lassen zu wollen. Ebenfalls möchte den Depotsverwaltern tunlichstes Entgegenkommen zu zeigen sein.

3. In jeder Provinz Belgiens hat das Zentralkomittee Unterkomitees eingesetzt, welche beauftragt sind die Bedürfnisse der Provinzen im Einvernehmen mit dem zuständigen Präsidenten der Zivilverwaltung festzustellen und durch dessen Vermittlung brieflich, oder soweit erforderlich, telegraphisch, hierher behufs Weitergabe an das Zentralkomitee in Brüssel, zu übermitteln. Weiterhin haben die Provinzkomitees die Aufgabe, für die Verteilung der Vorräte in die einzelnen Gemeinden ihres Bezirkes Sorge zu tragen. Es erscheint dringend erwünscht, dass die Vorsitzenden der Provinzkomitees im Verkehr mit den einzelnen Gemeinden der Provinz hinsichtlich der Passerteilung sowie besonders hinsichtlich der Beförderungsmittel von seiten der zuständigen Militär- und Zivilbehörden möglichstes Entgegenkommen finden.

Das Zentralkomitee besteht aus 18 sämmtlich in Brüssel wohnenden Mitgliedern, von denen je 2 aus den einzelnen 9 belgischen Provinzen stammen. Das Zentralkomitee wird demnächst 4 Personen bezeichnen, welche beauftragt sind die Tätigkeit der Provinzkomitees zu kontrollieren, weil ohne die Kontrolle die begründete Befürchtung besteht, dass ungerechtfertigte Ansprüche von einzelnen Provinzen dem Zentralkomitee gegenüber erhoben werden, die eine gleichmässige Verteilung der Vorräte für ganz Belgien in Frage stellen würden.

Die Namen der Vorsitzenden der Provinzial-Komitees sind folgende:

Ch. Janssen ..... Provinz Brabant
Louis Franck ..... Provinz Antwerpen
Constant Hendrickx ..... Provinz Ostflandern
Fulgence Masson ..... Provinz Hennegau
Paul Van Hoegaerden ..... Provinz Lüttich
le Baron Goffinet, Auguste ..... Provinz Luxemburg
le Baron A. d'Huart ..... Provinz Namur

4. Die Befreiung von Requisitionen bezieht sich gleichmässig auf diejenigen Vorräte, welche seitens der Armee-Intendantur in Mengen von je 5.000 Tonnen aus den in Antwerpen vorgefundenen Vorräten

dem Zentralkomitee verteilt und von diesem in den 5 Mühlen in Brüssel, 3 Mühlen in Löwen und einer Mühle in Vilvorde zum Vermahlen gebracht und von dort zum Teil bereits in die Depots nach Brüssel, Mons, Charleroi, Lüttich und Verviers überführt worden sind.

[35] DOCUMENT NO. 622

Letter, 10 December 1914, Belgian Railroad Administration to C.R.B., *confirming the reduction in freight rates on imported relief supplies*

Brussels, 10 December 1914

The Commission for Relief in Belgium,
Brussels

As we informed your representative on the 7th of this month we are willing to grant, from the 16th of December, a reduction in the loading tariff for foodstuffs (wheat, flour, rice, maize, and dried leguminous plants) imported by rail by the Comité de Secours for the relief of the Belgian population, on the basis of 5 cents per 1,000 Kgs. (1 ton) at a minimum freight rate of 10 francs per waggon. This represents a reduction of 50 per cent of the existing freight rate. The consignment must be sent with a certificate signed by the delegate of the Brussels Central Committee or of the Provincial Committee. The certificate is to have the following wording:

"We certify that it is consignment of foodstuffs of the Comité de Secours in Brussels, for the relief of the Belgian civilian population."

In order to notify the respective authorities, we should be glad to know, as soon as possible, which committees are authorized to give those certificates. At the same time we must make it a condition that the sender and the consignee be instructed to give, whenever required to do so, a proof to the railway authorities of the origin and destination of the merchandise.

Up to the 15th of December, we are willing to grant the same reduction on the receipt of a claim for restitution which must be addressed to us together with the respective certificates and bills of lading.

(Signed) Leo
Belgian Railroad Administration

[*Translation*]

[36] DOCUMENT NO. 623

Letter, 12 December 1914, von Sandt to Villalobar, *guaranteeing from requisition imported wearing apparel as well as clothing collected in Belgium for charitable purposes*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Brüssel, den 12. Dezember 1914

Auf das sehr gefällige Schreiben vom 22. v. M. beehre ich mich Euerer Exzellenz ganz ergebenst mitzuteilen, dass der Herr General-

General-Gouvernement
in Belgien.

Brüssel, den 16. Oktober 1914.

Sect. No.

1.

Auf die sehr gefällige Zuschrift vom heutigen Tage beehre ich mich ganz ergebenst zu erwidern, dass ich das Unternehmen des Comité Central de Secours et d'Alimentation mit lebhafter Genugtuung begrüsse und kein Bedenken trage, hiermit ausdrücklich und förmlich die Versicherung zu geben, dass die zur Ernährung der Zivilbevölkerung von Belgien seitens des Komitees eingeführten Lebensmittel aller Art ausschliesslich für die Bedürfnisse der Bevölkerung Belgiens vorbehalten sind, dass dieselben demnach von der Requisition seitens der Militärbehörden frei sein sollen und endlich, dass dieselben zur ausschliesslichen Verfügung des Komitees verbleiben.

Frhr. Goltz

German Guarantee, 16 October 1917, Signed by Governor General von der Goltz

gouverneur auch die Kleidungsstücke, die das Comité National einführt, sowie die zum Zwecken der Wohltätigkeit angefertigten und aufbewahrten Bekleidungsgegenstände in den belgischen Arbeitsstätten und Dépôts unter den Schutz gegen militärische Requisitionen gestellt hat.

Ich darf Euere Exzellenz bitten, den Interessenten hiervon Kenntnis geben zu wollen.

Mit dem Ausdruck vollkommenster Hochachtung habe ich die Ehre zu verbleiben,

Euerer Exzellenz sehr ergebener
(S.) VON SANDT

An Seine Exzellenz dem Königlich Spanischen Minister
Herrn Marquis de Villalobar,
Hier

[37] DOCUMENT NO. 624

Letter, 24 December 1914, MINISTER OF FINANCE TO THE C.R.B., *stating that the Governor-General had granted exemption of customs duty on imported flour*

Ministère des Finances

BRUXELLES, le 24 décembre 1914

MONSIEUR,

Sous confirmation de la lettre qui vous a été adressée le 22 décembre courant par M. l'Administrateur Directeur Général Janssens, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire savoir qu'un arrêté de M. le Gouverneur Général en date du 17 de ce mois, dont je viens de recevoir connaissance, accorde l'exemption des droits d'entrée pour les farines étrangères livrées au Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation.

En conséquence, les instructions nécessaires ont été données à la douane de Loozen en vue de la restitution de la somme de 8.000 fr. qui a été consignée pour les farines chargées à bord du bateau "Emmanuel," auquel se rapporte votre requête du 22 de ce mois, n° 25.

Agréez, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

Pour l'Administrateur-Directeur Général des contributions directes, douanes et accises:

LE DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL

The Commission for Relief in Belgium
48 Rue de Naples
Bruxelles

Label, 1 January 1915, authorized by GENERAL GOVERNMENT, *protecting shipments of relief supplies from requisition*

COMITÉ NATIONAL DE SECOURS ET D'ALIMENTATION

Sous le Haut Patronage des Ministres d'Espagne et des Etats-Unis

5080 A

SERVICE DE TRANSPORT ET D'EMMAGASINAGE DE VIVRES, DENREES ET MARCHANDISES DIVERSES

Stempel des deutschen General-Gouvernements in Belgien
Cachet du Gouvernement Général allemand en Belgique

Auf Befehl des deutschen General-Gouvernements in Belgien, dürfen alle die dem *Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation* gehörenden Waren die für die belgische Civilbevölkerung bestimmt sind, von den deutschen Militär- oder Civilbehörden weder requiriert noch beschlagnahmt werden.

Ebenfalls dürfen die zum Transport nötigen Führer, Zugtiere und Wagen aller Art weder requiriert noch beschlagnahmt werden.

BRÜSSEL, den 1. Januari 1915

Par ordre du Gouvernement Général allemand en Belgique, toutes les marchandises appartenant au *Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation* et destinées aux besoins de la population civile belge, ne peuvent être ni réquisitionnées ni saisies par les autorités militaires ou civiles allemandes.

De même, les conducteurs, attelages et véhicules de tout genre affectés au transport de ces marchandises ne peuvent être ni réquisitionnés ni saisis.

BRUXELLES, le 1er janvier 1915

[39] DOCUMENT NO. 626

Letter, 13 January 1915, VON SANDT TO WHITLOCK, *informing him of the extension of the guarantees to exempt imported fodder from military requisition*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Geschäftsnummer VII–450 II

BRÜSSEL, den 13. Januar 1915

Euer Exzellenz beehre ich mich sehr ergebenst mitzuteilen, dass der Herr General-Gouverneur nach einer Verordnung vom 5. d. M. die Befreiung der vom Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation für die Zivilbevölkerung in Belgien aus dem Auslande eingeführten Lebensmittel u.s.w. von jeder militärischen Requisition auch auf Futtermittel und Vieh ausgedehnt hat, welche das Comité einführen wird.

Es sind ferner, wie aus der beifolgenden Verordnung des Herrn General-Gouverneurs vom 26. Dezember v. J. hervorgeht, bestimmte Tierarten vor militärischem Zugriff geschützt. Somit ist den von dem Comité National, section agricole, vorgetragenen Wünschen weitgehende Rechnung getragen worden.

Mit dem Ausdruck vollkommenster Hochachtung habe ich die Ehre zu verbleiben,

Euerer Exzellenz
sehr ergebener
(S.) DR. VON SANDT

An Seine Exzellenz
den Minister der Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika,
Herrn Brand Whitlock,
Brüssel

[40] DOCUMENT NO. 627

Letter, 19 January 1915, VON SANDT TO THE C.R.B., *stating that importations of all relief supplies are duty free*

BRUSSELS, 19 January 1915

The Commission for Relief in Belgium,
Brussels

GENTLEMEN:

In response to your favor of December 31st, I have the honor to inform you that bacon, ham, and apples are in accordance with the

Belgian tariff already duty-free. The same thing will probably prove to be the case with the other articles of food which you import, since most articles of food are duty-free in Belgium. Consequently no further measures are necessary in order to secure the duty-free importation of such articles of food.

(Signed) Dr. Sandt
General Government in Belgium

[*Translation*]

[41]

Decree, 21 January 1915, by von Bissing, *prohibiting the requisition, by the military, of foodstuffs and fodder of any kind replacement of which must be effected by importation* (Document 322, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

General-Gouvernement
in
Belgien

IV a No. 533/1.IIa

Brüssel, den 21. I. 1915

Mit meiner Zustimmung ist durch Vermittlung des Auswärtigen Amtes dem Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation die Zusicherung gemacht worden, dass *sämtlichen mir unterstellten Truppen* verboten wird, Nahrungs- oder künstliche Futtermittel irgend welcher Art, deren Ersatz durch Einfuhr seitens des Comités zu erfolgen hat, zu requirieren.

Indem ich im Anschlusse an den Erlass vom 24. 11. 14. IVa. IIb. Nr. 727/II. II dieses Verbot ergehen lasse, bemerke ich, dass es sich bei den vom Comité eingeführten Vorräten bisher um Mehl und Brotgetreide, Reis, Erbsen, Bohnen, Salz, Mais und Zucker gehandelt hat, dass aber in nächster Zeit voraussichtlich auch Futterkuchen und andere künstliche Futtermittel werden eingeführt werden.

Vorräte dieser Art dürfen deshalb von den mir unterstellten Truppen überhaupt nicht mehr—also auch nicht gegen Bezahlung—requiriert werden.

Die in Ziffer 6 meines Erlasses vom 29. 12. 14. IVa 1628/12 I bezüglich der in Antwerpen pp. festgehaltenen Massengüter gemachten Ausnahme gilt auch im vorliegenden Falle.

(gez.) Frhr. von Bissing
Für die Richtigkeit:
(gez.) Kritszler
Feld-Intendanturrat

[42] DOCUMENT NO. 628

Letter, 21 January 1915, General Government to Whitlock, *exempting pharmaceutical articles from requisition*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Brüssel, den 21. Januar 1915

Euer Exzellenz

Beehre ich mich auf die Note vom 28. Dezember 1914, sehr ergebenst zu erwidern, dass der Herr Generalgouverneur auch die vom Comité National aus dem Auslande eingeführten pharmazeutischen Artikel von jeder Requisition im Gebiet des Generalgouvernements befreit hat. Ich bitte ergebenst um Benachrichtigung des Comité National.

Mit dem Ausdrucke vorzüglicher Hochachtung, habe ich die Ehre zu verbleiben Euer Exzellenz

Sehr ergebener
Im Auftrage:
(S.) Kaufmann

An Seine Exzellenz
den Minister der Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika
Herrn Brand Whitlock,
Brüssel

[43] DOCUMENT NO. 629

Letter, 24 January 1915, General Government to Comité National, *exempting relief supplies from canal tolls in the Occupation Zone*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Brüssel, den 24. Januar 1915

Auf das Schreiben vom 31 v. Mts. u. Js.

Ihrem Antrag auf Gewährung von Abgabenfreiheit für Ihre Transporte auf den Kanälen habe ich für das Okkupationsgebiet, soweit dem Staate Einnahmen aus den Kanalgebühren erwachsen, stattgegeben und das Finanzministerium mit der entsprechenden Weisung versehen.

An
das Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation
Hier
rue des Colonies 66 III

[44] DOCUMENT NO. 630

Declaration, 25 January 1915, by the General Government, *freeing benzine and automobile tires imported for the relief organization from requisition*

General-Gouvernement in Belgien

Brüssel, den 25ten Januar 1915

Das General-Gouvernement gibt die Erklärung ab, dass das von der Gesandtschaft der Vereinigten Staaten aus Holland einzuführende Benzin, sowie Automobilreifen von deutschen Truppen oder Behörden keinesfalls requiriert wird.

Von Seiten des General-Gouvernements
Der Oberquartiermeister
(signature illegible)
Oberstlieutenant

[45]

Letter, 20 February 1915, von Bissing to Heineman (for Hoover), *stating the regulations and limitations laid down for the American representatives* (Document 32, chapter ii, is an English translation of this letter)

[46] DOCUMENT NO. 631

Letter, 8 April 1915, General Government to the C.R.B., *permitting the American flag to be hoisted over the central warehouse in Brussels and white flags of the Comité National over the smaller stores*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien
Geschäftsnummer VII. 1293

Brüssel, den 8. April 1915

Auf das gefl. Schreiben vom 23. März d. J.

Der Herr Generalgouverneur hat sich, dem dortigen Wunsche entsprechend, damit einverstanden erklärt, dass zur Kennzeichnung des neutralen Characters der dem Comité National gehörigen, unter amerikanischem Schutze stehenden Warenlager an dem Zentrallager des Comités in Brüssel sowie an den Hauptlagern in jeder Provinz am Sitze des Gouverneurs die amerikanische Flagge angebracht wird.

Dagegen sollen an allen anderen Lagern des Comités nur weisse Fahnen mit der roten Aufschrift "Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation" Verwendung finden. Die Truppen sind darauf hingewiesen worden, dass alle Lager des Comités, welche eine amerikanische oder die Flagge des Comités tragen, vor jeglicher Requisition geschützt sind. Vorstehendes bezieht sich, wie ich ausdrücklich bemerke, nur auf das Gebiet des General-Gouvernements.

Ich ersuche ergebenst, das Comité National zu veranlassen, die Orte und Stellen, an welchen sich die einzelnen Lager befinden, alsbald den zuständigen Herren Militärgouverneuren mitzuteilen.

(gez.) D. v. SANDT

An die
Commission for Relief in Belgium,
66 rue des Colonies,
Brüssel

[47] DOCUMENT NO. 632

Letter, 2 May 1915, GENERAL GOVERNMENT TO THE C.R.B., *limiting importation of drugs from foreign countries to those not procurable in Germany*

The Administrative Head
to the
Governor-General in Belgium

BRUSSELS, 2 May 1915

To the Commission for Relief in Belgium
Brussels

GENTLEMEN:

It has come to my attention that considerable quantities of drugs of all sorts have been imported into Belgium from foreign countries by the Commission for Relief in Belgium. In order to guard against injury to a German industry, since Germany has heretofore supplied the major part of Belgium's drugs, I must insist that only those wares shall be imported by the Commission as can at present not be supplied from Germany (for example—castor-oil, ipecacuanha, senega, bolygala, glycerine, vaseline, camphor, bismuth, as well as opium, morphine, and codeine in small quantities). Any other drugs than those mentioned I must request that you do not import from other countries, but secure from Germany if you need them.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of this communication.

For the Administrative Head
(Signed) KAUFMANN

[*Translation*]

[48] DOCUMENT NO. 633

Letter, 7 June 1915, GENERAL GOVERNMENT TO THE C.R.B., *limiting exports from Belgium to Northern France*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien
VII 2486

BRUSSELS, 7 June 1915

The Commission for Relief in Belgium
Brussels

Your favor of May 26, 1915, to the Governor General

DEAR SIRS:

Through an agreement under date of April 13, with the Supreme Command the Commission have undertaken the revictualling of the population of the occupied territory by means of foodstuffs to be imported from abroad.

The exportation of foodstuffs from Belgium to Northern France was not thought of. However, at a special request of the Commission, and in view of the urgency, I have already issued the following export permits:

On June 2nd: 25,000 Kg. sugar; 25,000 Kg. coffee.
On June 5th: 100,000 Kg. salt, 10,000 Kg. vinegar, 13,000 Kg. edible oils, 500 Kg. maize, 300 Kg. pepper, 25,000 Kg. crystallized sugar, 25,000 Kg. coffee, 25,000 Kg. soft soap, 25,000 Kg. chicory.

Departing from the above principle, the Commission, by their letter of the 26th of May to the Governor General, have now asked for a general authorization to export monthly large quantities of goods from Belgium to Northern France. To my regret, however, I cannot see my way to give such a general authorization. On the other hand, I am prepared to issue export permits in occasional cases, keeping in view the following points:

As long as there is an ample supply in Belgium, and part of this supply can be removed without endangering the victualling of the Belgian population, I will accord permit, for example, for salt, vinegar, roasted chicory, soft soap (the latter being under the competence of the Commissar des Kriegsministeriums). I will also issue permits for such goods as are imported from abroad by the Comité National, and which are intended for reforwarding to France, such goods having been stored for a limited time only in their warehouses in Belgium. Proof of this would have to be given with the export requests for edible oils, condensed milk, macaroni, etc. The export of sugar would only be allowed in small quantities as the supply of crystallized and refined sugar is not large in Belgium.

As it appears from the enclosed documents, which please return to me, I have before me several requests for exportation of yeast. But as the production of yeast in Belgium is much smaller now than in time of peace, according to information from the Belgian Ministère des Finance, and is scarcely sufficient for the needs of the

country, I can only allow the exportation of yeast if the Commission undertake to furnish the yeast producers in Belgium with the necessary raw materials for the increase in the production of yeast (as put forth in the letter from the Comité d'Alimentation de Lille).

I shall be glad to receive a prompt reply and to know the position you take up regarding the three enclosed requests for importation, which please return to me after perusal.

(Signed) ————————

[*Translation*]

[49]

Letter, 26 June 1915, VON BISSING TO WHITLOCK, *objecting to extension of the activities of the relief organization, particularly the help given to the unemployed* (Document 36, chapter ii, is an English translation of the following)

General-Gouvernement
in Belgien

BRÜSSEL, 26 juin 1915

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

J'ai l'honneur de porter à la connaissance de Votre Excellence quelques mesures, que j'ai cru devoir prendre concernant le Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation.

La protection et les faveurs que je n'ai jamais cessé d'accorder à cette institution, font preuve de l'intérêt, que je porte au Comité et à son action bienfaisante en faveur de la population belge.

Il est toutefois apparu que la sphère d'activité du Comité a pris une étendue qui n'avait pas été prévue lors de sa création. En conséquence j'ai estimé nécessaire que l'activité du Comité soit clairement délimitée et que les rapports mutuels de l'administration sous mes ordres et des sousorganes du Comité soient réglés de façon à éviter que des frictions ne se produisent, qui entraveraient nécessairement les travaux du dit Comité.

Pour ce motif et pour qu'une connaissance plus approfondie de la manière de travailler du Comité permette aux autorités du pays de faciliter la tâche de ce dernier, tout en empêchant des transgressions de pouvoir éventuelles de ses sousorganes, j'ai donné aux Gouverneurs sous mes ordres les instructions dont j'ai l'honneur ci-après de communiquer à Votre Excellence la teneur en substance:

Les autorités dans les provinces auront à tâche de se tenir informées de l'activité des nombreuses sous-organisations du Comité National dans leur district. Les présidents de l'administration civile des provinces s'efforceront de maintenir un contact permanent avec les dirigeants des comités dans leurs chefs-lieux. Ce contact s'établirait de la façon la plus utile, si les présidents assistaient aux séances regulières de ces comités, comme cela s'est d'ailleurs fait depuis des mois dans la province de Hainaut. Il est à souhaiter que les commissaires civils allemands près les "Kreischefs" agissent de façon similaire vis-à-vis des comités régionaux de leurs districts.

La censure des correspondances des comités sera à l'avenir exercée par les autorités civiles (présidents et commissaires civils alle-

mands) en lieu et place des autorités militaires qui l'ont exercée jusqu'à présent.

Les comités ne pourront pas donner directement des instructions aux communes; ils ne pourront pas organiser des enquêtes, envoyer des questionnaires ou circulaires aux communes, ni faire dresser par celles-ci des listes ou des statistiques quelconques sans avoir au préalable consulté le président ou le commissaire civil allemand. Les comités ne pourront pas agir auprès des communes en vue de l'obtention d'arrêtés ou de règlements en leur faveur; toutes mesures de cette espèce devront être proposées au président ou commissaire allemand compétent.

Toute entrave à la liberté personnelle ou à la liberté du commerce étant défendue, il y a lieu de ne permettre aucune menace verbale ou par écrit prononcée ou exécutée envers une personne ou une commune, soit d'arrêter la fourniture de vivres, soit d'exiger pour ces vivres un prix plus élevé, soit de lui refuser des secours. D'une manière générale il doit être défendu aux comités de faire usage de n'importe quel moyen de pression pour obtenir tant des communes que des particuliers l'obéissance à ses instructions. Toutes mesures à prendre vis-à-vis de ces derniers doivent être proposées par le comité aux autorités compétentes qui leur donneront la suite qu'elles jugeront utile.

Les relevés des prévisions de recettes et de dépenses établis mensuellement par les comités provinciaux doivent être communiqués aux présidents de l'administration civile allemande. Ceux-ci seront ainsi mis à même de rester informés au sujet du mouvement des fonds de ces comités.

En dehors des règles générales ci-dessus énumérées, j'ai encore donné pour un certain nombre de cas particuliers, les instructions suivantes:

Concernant les secours à accorder aux chômeurs, les présidents veilleront à ce que ceux-ci n'entravent pas la reprise du travail par la population ouvrière. En outre, des secours ne peuvent être remis à des ouvriers ayant refusé un travail rémunérateur.

Ayant moi-même fait procéder à des estimations des dégâts occasionnés par la guerre, toute enquête du comité à ce sujet ainsi qu'au sujet de réquisitions des troupes allemandes ne peut être autorisée.

Le Comité ayant obtenu des communes la remise de pouvoirs de police à ses inspecteurs vis-à-vis des meuniers, boulangers, etc., et les communes ayant souscrit l'obligation de faire exécuter les sanctions édictées par les inspecteurs, toutes mesures de cette espèce devront être rapportées, l'administration sous mes ordres ayant seule qualité pour édicter ces mesures. Les surveillants du Comité ou de la Commission for Relief in Belgium ont le droit de faire des constantations concernant les abus commis par les meuniers, boulangers, etc., mais leur droit se borne à faire à ces constatations. Il leur est loisible ensuite de les communiquer aux autorités compétentes avec prière de leur donner la suite qu'elles comportent.

Toutes mesures de coercition exercées vis-à-vis des communes ou des particuliers pour l'obtention de fonds destinés à la constitution d'un capital de roulement ou à tout autre usage ne peuvent être autorisées.

Les présidents de l'administration civile s'entendront avec les dirigeants des comités pour réduire dans la mesure du possible les prix de vente des denrées alimentaires.

Toute tendance de la part du comité à monopoliser la distribution des secours en Belgique doit être empêchée. Le principe doit être maintenu que toutes autres organisations de bienfaisance, avant tout la croix rouge belge, ont le droit de fonctionner à côté et en dehors du comité.

Je ne doute pas que ces mesures prises par moi ne soient conformes aux intentions de Votre Excellence. J'en doute d'autant moins que j'ai toujours eu à coeur de respecter scrupuleusement les arrangements conclus avec le Gouvernement répresenté par Votre Excellence concernant l'alimentation de la population belge. Votre Excellence se sera rendu compte que toutes les dispositions énoncées ne visent qu'au maintien des droits qui, conformément aux conventions internationales, reviennent à l'occupant du pays.

Je me flatte de l'espoir que Votre Excellence partagera ma conviction que la ligne de conduite ainsi tracée à mon administration servira à garantir un travail commun et utile, fondé sur une confiance réciproque pour le bien-être de la population belge.

Je prie Votre Excellence de bien vouloir communiquer ce qui précède au Comité National, et je saisis l'occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurances de ma haute considération.

(S.) Frhrr. von Bissing

A

Son Excellence
Monsieur Brand Whitlock,
Ministre des Etats-Unis d'Amérique
à Bruxelles

[50]

Decree, 30 June 1915, issued by the Governor-General, *regarding the seizure of cereals of the harvest of 1915 in the Occupation Zone* (Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für die okkupierten Gebiete Belgiens, No. 91. Document 342, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

Verordnung

über die Beschlagnahme des Brotgetreides, der Gerste und des Mehls aus dem Erntejahr 1915

Ich habe mich entschlossen, die Brotgetreideernte und die anderen unter No. 1. angeführten Erzeugnisse der Landwirtschaft dieses Jahres dem ausschliesslichen Verbrauch der Zivilbevölkerung im Bereich des Generalgouvernements zu überlassen. Zu diesem Zwecke ordne ich zunächst die Beschlagnahme der unten bezeichneten Erntevorräte nach Massgabe der nachstehenden Bestimmungen an. Durch die Beschlagnahme sollen Preistreibereien verhindert werden, die eine Verteuerung des Brotes zur Folge haben könnten; zugeleich ermöglicht die Beschlagnahme eine gerechte und den allseitigen Bedürfnissen des Landes Rechnung tragende Verteilung der Getreidevorräte und des Mehls. Ich erwarte bestimmt, dass die belgische

Bevölkerung, insbesondere die landwirtschaftlichen Unternehmer, im Hinblick auf die dem Lande ausschliesslich zugute kommenden Massnahmen bei deren Durchführung willig mitarbeiten werden.

1.

Das in Belgien im Bereich des Generalgouvernements angebaute Brotgetreide aller Art, wie: Roggen, Weizen, Spelz, ebenso auch Gerste (Futter- und Braugerste) wird, gleichviel ob ungemengt oder mit anderen Getreiden gemengt, mit der Trennung vom Boden zu Gunsten der Zivilbevölkerung im Bereich des Generalgouvernements hiermit beschlagnahmt. Die Beschlagnahme erstreckt sich auch auf den Halm und das aus beschlagnahmtem Brotgetreide ermahlene Mehl (einschliesslich Dunst). Mit dem Ausdreschen wird das Stroh von dieser Beschlagnahme frei.

2.

An den beschlagnahmten Vorräten dürfen, sowie sich nicht aus den folgenden Bestimmungen etwas anderes ergibt, weder Veränderungen vorgenommen werden, noch darf durch Vereinbarung oder Vertrag über sie verfügt werden.

3.

Der Besitzer beschlagnahmter Vorräte ist berechtigt und verpflichtet, alle zur Erhaltung der Vorräte erforderlichen Handlungen vorzunehmen, er ist berechtigt und verpflichtet auszudreschen.

4.

Nimmt der Besitzer beschlagnahmter Vorräte eine zur Erhaltung derselben erforderliche Handlung innerhalb einer ihm von dem Kreischef gesetzten Frist nicht vor, so kann dieser die Handlung auf Kosten des Besitzers durch einen Dritten vornehmen lassen. Das Gleiche gilt, wenn der Besitzer das Brotgetreide nicht innerhalb einer ihm von dem Kreischef gesetzten Frist ausdrischt.

5.

Mit Gefängnis bis zu fünf Jahren oder mit Geldstrafe bis zu 20 000 Mark wird bestraft:

a) wer beschlagnahmte Vorräte unbefugt bei Seite schafft, oder aus der Gemeinde, in der sie beschlagnahmt sind, unbefugt entfernt, wer sie beschädigt, zerstört, unbefugt verarbeitet oder verbraucht;

b) wer beschlagnahmte Vorräte unbefugt verkauft, kauft oder ein anderes Veräusserungs- oder Erwerbsgeschäft über sie abschliesst;

c) wer die zur Erhaltung der Vorräte erforderlichen Handlungen widerrechtlich unterlässt oder das Brotgetreide nicht binnen der ihm gesetzten Frist ausdrischt.

Als Gerichte sind die deutschen Militärgerichte zuständig.

6.

Das beschlagnahmte Getreide wird gegen Barzahlung—bei Uebernahme—durch eine von mir einzusetzende Erntekommission angekauft und der Bevölkerung im Bereiche des Generalgouvernements zugeführt werden.

7.

Der Erlass von Ausführungsvorschriften bleibt vorbehalten.

Brüssel, den 30. Juni 1915

Der Generalgouverneur in Belgien
Freiherr von Bissing,
Generaloberst

[51] DOCUMENT NO. 634

Letter, 3 July 1915, General Government to the C.R.B., *giving provisional exemption from requisition for C.R.B. horses*

Brussels, 3 July 1915

To the Commission for Relief in Belgium,
Brussels

In response to your favor of the 28th of June of this year, I have the honor to inform you that for the present presumably your horses are not being reduced in number by requisition, since the necessary horses for army purposes are being obtained by purchase in open market.

We are not, however, able to assure you of a freedom from requisition of horses which shall apply in all cases in the future.

Very respectfully,

for the Governor General
(Signed) Mueller

[*Translation*]

[52]

Letter, 4 July 1915, von Bissing to Whitlock, *stating that the 1915 harvest of wheat will be reserved for the civil population* (Document 340, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

Der General Gouverneur
in Belgien
P.A.
J. Nr. V. 61

Brüssel, den le 4 juillet 1915

Monsieur le Ministre,

J'ai été heureux d'apprendre par la lettre que Votre Excellence a bien voulu m'envoyer en date du 3 juillet dernier que Votre Excellence, ainsi que Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre de Sa Majesté le Roi d'Espagne et Monsieur le Chargé d'Affaires des Pays-Bas sont d'accord avec le mémorandum que, sur mes ordres, Monsieur le Baron von der Lancken a eu l'honneur de leur transmettre au sujet des différents arrangements à intervenir pour le Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation de la Belgique, en vue de la prochaine récolte et de la continuation du ravitaillement.

Je m'empresse de confirmer ci-après à Votre Excellence le texte de ce mémorandum:

"Le Gouverneur Général en Belgique tiendra à la disposition de la population civile belge du territoire placé sous ses ordres le produit de la récolte de blé de 1915 servant à la fabrication du pain (froment et seigle). De son côté, le Comité National (et la Commission for Relief in Belgium) sous le patronage de MM. les Ministres d'Espagne, des Etats-Unis d'Amérique et des Pays-Bas, continuera à importer en Belgique, en quantitiés mensuelles à peu près égales, jusqu'à la récolte de 1916, les denrées nécessaires à l'alimentation de la population civile dans le territoire occupé sous les ordres du Gouverneur Général en Belgique.

"Aussitôt que Monsieur le Gouverneur Général aura pris une décision au sujet de la répartition de la récolte de 1915 du blé désigné ci-dessus, cette décision sera portée à la connaissance de MM. les Protecteurs."

Après avoir reçu la lettre de Votre Excellence je constate à nouveau avec satisfaction que l'oeuvre du ravitaillement, placée sous le patronage des dignes représentants des trois puissances neutres, continuera jusqu'à la récolte de 1916, sous les auspices de leurs gouvernements, à assurer l'alimentation de la population belge.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Ministre, les assurances de ma haute considération.

(S.) Frhrr. v. Bissing

Son Excellence
Monsieur Brand Whitlock
Ministre des Etats-Unis d'Amérique
à Bruxelles

[53]

Decree, 23 July 1915, by the Governor-General, *concerning methods of handling the 1915 crop of bread grains in the General Government Zone* (Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für die okkupierten Gebiete Belgiens, No. 102. Document 343, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

Verordnung

betreffend Brotgetreideernte 1915 im Gebiet des General-Gouvernements

Die Ziffer 6 der Verordnung vom 30. Juni 1915—Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für Belgien Seite 747 ff—bestimmt:

"Das beschlagnahmte Getreide wird gegen Barzahlung—bei Uebernahme—durch eine von mir einzusetzende Erntekommission angekauft und der Bevölkerung im Bereiche des General-Gouvernements zugeführt werden."

Teilweise abändernd verordne ich hierzu:

1. Ich erteile dem Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation das alleinige Recht zum Ankauf der beschlagnahmten Vorräte und etwaiger Restbestände an Brotgetreide gegen Barzahlung zu einem Einheitspreis, den ich festsetzen werde.

Die Beschlagnahme wird durch diesen Ankauf nicht aufgehoben.

2. Als mir unterstellte Behörden werden eingesetzt in Brüssel eine Zentral-Ernte-Kommission und in jeder Provinz-Hauptstadt eine Ernte-Kommission für die betreffende Provinz.

3. Die Zentral-Ernte-Kommission ist eine mir unmittelbar unterstellte Behörde, deren Vorsitzenden, Mitglieder und deren ständige Stellvertreter ich ernennen werde. Den Vorsitz führt ein Vertreter des General-Gouvernements.

Als Mitglieder werde ich in die Kommission berufen je einen Vertreter:

a) der Zivilverwaltung, welcher zugleich stellvertretender Vorsitzender ist,
b) der Politischen Abteilung,
c) des Generalkommissars für die Banken,
d) der Armee-Intendantur des General-Gouvernements,
e) des Comité National,
f) der Commission for Relief

Bei Stimmengleichheit gibt der Vorsitzende den Ausschlag. Der Vorsitzende hat das Recht, Sachverständige mit beratender Stimme zu den Sitzungen heranzuziehen.

Die Verhandlungssprache ist deutsch.

4. Die Erntekommission für jede Provinz setzt sich zusammen aus:

a) dem Präsidenten der Zivilverwaltung bezw. dessen Vertreter als Vorsitzenden,
b) zwei Offizieren oder Beamten, Mitgliedern des Wirtschaftsausschusses der Provinz,
c) einem Mitglied der Députation Permanente,
d) einem Vertreter des Getreidehandels der Provinz,
e) einem Vertreter der Landwirtschaft der Provinz.

Die Mitglieder unter *c*) bis *e*) sollen in der Regel nicht zugleich Mitglieder des Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation sein.

Die Mitglieder der Kommission, sowie für jedes Mitglied einen ständigen Stellvertreter beruft der Gouverneur der Provinz.

Bei Stimmengleichheit gibt der Vorsitzende den Ausschlag.

Der Vorsitzende ist befugt, Sachverständige mit beratender Stimme zu den Sitzungen hinzuzuziehen. Der Vorsitzende hat das Recht, Beschlüsse der Kommission zu beanstanden und dagegen durch Vermittlung des Verwaltungschefs und der Zentral-Ernte-Kommission meine Entscheidung anzurufen.

5. Die Zentral-Ernte-Kommission hat zu bestimmen, welche Mengen jeweils von der Beschlagnahme freigegeben werden und der Bevölkerung zugeführt werden dürfen.

Sie überwacht die Brotversorgung der belgischen Bevölkerung und hat insbesondere dafür zu sorgen, dass von der gesamten belgischen Brotgetreideernte 1915 nach Zurückstellung des erforderlichen Saatgutes nicht mehr als 1/12 monatlich verbraucht wird.

Sie hat mir ausserdem Vorschläge über die Einheitssätze des Verbrauchs für den Kopf der Bevölkerung, über die Einkaufspreise des erdroschenen Brotgetreides, über die Ausmahlung und über die Höchstpreise für den Verkauf von erdroschenem Brotgetreide, von Mehl, Kleie und Brot zu machen.

Die Zentral-Ernte-Kommission versieht die Provinz-Ernte-Kommissionen durch Vermittlung des Verwaltungschefs mit Anweisung—bei Fragen grundsätzlicher Bedeutung, nachdem sie vorher meine Entscheidung eingeholt hat—und überwacht deren Ausführung.

6. Der Ernte-Kommission jeder einzelnen Provinz liegt die monatliche Freigabe des Brotgetreides an das Comité National ob. Die Freigabe erfolgt auf Grund des durch sie zu sammelnden und dauernd auf dem Laufenden zu haltenden statistischen Materials. Sie beaufsichtigt die eigenen und aus anderen Provinzen etwa zugeführten Vorräte, die Einhaltung der festgesetzten Kaufpreise sowie im Allgemeinen alle Geschäftshandlungen der von dem Comité National in jeder Provinz zum Zwecke des Ankaufs und der Verteilung des einheimischen Brotgetreides zu errichtenden besonderen Geschäftsstelle.

Sie hat die Befugnis, die belgischen Gemeinden zu diesem Zweck mit Anweisungen zu versehen. Die Rechte und Obliegenheiten des ständigen Ausschusses gemäss Art. 121, 133 und 147 des Gemeindegesetzes gehen in diesem Falle auf den Präsidenten der Provinzial-Ernte-Kommission über.

7. Wer den zur Ausführung dieser Verordnung erlassenen Anordnungen und Anweisungen nicht Folge leistet, wird mit Gefängnis bis zu 5 Jahren oder mit Geldstrafe bis zu 20 000 M. bestraft; auch kann auf Gefängnis neben der Geldstrafe erkannt werden.

Als Gerichte sind die deutschen Militärgerichte zuständig.

Die Strafbestimmungen des Artikels 5 der Verordnung vom 30 Juni 1915 (Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für die okkupierten Gebiete Belgiens Seite 747/55) bleiben unberührt.

8. Diese Verordnung bezieht sich nicht auf die Gerste.

9. Den Erlass von Ausführungsbestimmungen behalte ich mir vor.

Brüssel, den 23. Juli 1915

Der Generalgouverneur in Belgien
Freiherr von Bissing
Generaloberst

[54]

Decree, 27 July 1915, by the Governor-General, *concerning the seizure of the oat crop of 1915 in the Occupation Zone* (Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für die okkupierten Gebiete Belgiens, No. 103. Document 346, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

Verordnung

über die Beschlagnahme des Hafers aus dem Erntejahr 1915 in den belgischen Gebietsteilen des Generalgouvernements in Belgien

ART. 1

Die Haferernte des Erntejahres 1915 wird im Bereich des Generalgouvernements mit der Trennung vom Boden für die Heeresverwal-

tung beschlagnahmt. Die Beschlagnahme erstreckt sich auch auf den Halm. Das Stroh wird mit dem Ausdreschen von der Beschlagnahme frei.

Jeder Unternehmer eines landwirtschaftlichen Betriebes und jeder Käufer von Hafer auf dem Halm ist verpflichtet, für ordnungsmässige Aberntung des Hafers zu sorgen.

ART. 2

Soweit nachfolgend nicht anders bestimmt ist, darf an dem beschlagnahmten Hafer

a) keine Veränderung vorgenommen werden,

b) durch Vereinbarung oder Vertrag über ihn zu Gunsten dritter Personen keine Verfügung getroffen werden.

Als solche Verfügungen kommen unter anderem in Betracht: Ankauf, Verkauf, Verpfändung, Verschenken, Beleihung.

ART. 3

Jeder Unternehmer eines landwirtschaftlichen Betriebes im Bereich des General-Gouvernements in Belgien, in dem im Erntejahr 1915 Hafer erzeugt wurde, oder jeder sonstige Besitzer von Hafer aus dem Erntejahr 1915 ist verpflichtet, alle zur Erhaltung der beschlagnahmten Vorräte erforderlichen Handlungen einschliesslich des Dreschens vorzunehmen und den Hafer mit der Sorgfalt eines ordentlichen Hausvaters zu behandeln.

Er hat:

a) der Heeresverwaltung auf Anfordern allen Hafer mit alleiniger Ausnahme des in Ziffer 6*a* und 6*b* bezeichneten Saathafers und Futterhafers käuflich zu überlassen, ihn rechtzeitig anzufahren, zu liefern und zu verladen;

b) den Beauftragten der Heeresverwaltung den Zutritt zu allen Räumen seines Anwesens zum Zweck der Erfüllung ihrer Dienstaufgabe zu gestatten, ihnen etwa vorhandene Geschäftsbücher vorzulegen und ihnen den Nachweis über den Verbleib des in seinem Betrieb geernteten Hafers zu erbringen.

ART. 4

Jedem Unternehmer eines landwirtschaftlichen Betriebes oder sonstigem Besitzer von Hafer aus dem Erntejahr 1915 ist verboten

a) das Verfüttern von Hafersaatgut,

b) jeder Transport von Hafer ohne Begleitschein der Heeresverwaltung mit Ausnahme des Transportes vom Feld zum Anwesen, vom Anwesen zur Dreschmaschine und von der Dreschmaschine zurück zum Anwesen.

ART. 5

Nimmt ein Unternehmer eines landwirtschaftlichen Betriebes oder ein sonstiger Besitzer von Hafer aus dem Erntejahr 1915 eine der in Art. 3. Abs. 1 und II*a* vorgeschriebenen Handlungen innerhalb einer von der Heersverwaltung oder in ihrem Auftrage festgesetzten Frist

nicht vor, so lässt diese die Handlungen durch Dritte auf Kosten des Unternehmers oder Besitzers vornehmen.

ART. 6

Von der Beschlagnahme werden zu Gunsten des Besitzers landwirtschaftlicher Betriebe frei:

a) mit der Aussaat, für jedes Hektar der von ihm im Jahre 1915 bebauten Fläche, je 170 kg Saathafer bester Beschaffenheit und eigener Erzeugung,

b) mit dem Verfüttern, für jeden Tag und für jedes Pferd im Besitz des Unternehmers, je 2 500 Gramm Hafer, gleich rund 920 Kilogramm Hafer für jedes Jahr und jedes Pferd.

Unter "Jahr" ist die Zeit vom 1. September 1915 bis 31. August 1916 zu verstehen.

Die Heeresverwaltung wird für jedes Pferd, das sich nicht im Besitze eines Unternehmers eines landwirtschaftlichen, im Jahre 1915 Hafer erzeugenden Betriebes befindet, als Jahresanteil je rund 920 kg Hafer zum Ankauf von Produzenten freigeben. Auf Antrag des Kreischefs können in dringenden Fällen, und zwar in erster Linie für die in den Bergwerken verwendenten Pferde, durch die Heeresverwaltung höhere als die vorbezeichneten Sätze zugelassen werden.

ART. 7

Die Heeresverwaltung vergütet für jede 100 kg von ihr übernommenen und rechtzeitig an die von ihr bestimmte Stelle gelieferten Hafers guter marktgängiger Qualität im Mindestgewicht von 44 kg per Hectoliter 33 Franken. Den Preis für minderwertigen Hafer bestimmt die Heeresverwaltung auf Grund von ihr eingeholten Sachverständigen-Gutachtens.

ART. 8

Wer den Art. 1, 2. Abs., Art. 2, 3 oder 4 dieser Verordnung zuwiderhandelt, wird mit Gefängnis bis zu 5 Jahren oder mit Geldstrafe bis zu 20 000 Franken bestraft. Auf beide Strafarten kann nebeneinander erkannt werden. Zugleich kann in den Fällen der Art. 2, 3*a* oder 4*b* auf Einziehung des Hafers zu Gunsten der Heeresverwaltung erkannt werden.

ART. 9

Zuständig zur Aburteilung sind die deutschen Militärgerichte.

ART. 10

Der Erlass von Ausführungsvorschriften bleibt vorbehalten.

Brüssel, den 27. Juli 1915

Generalgouverneur in Belgien
Freiherr von Bissing
Generaloberst

G. G. VII 3745

[55]

Letter, 29 July 1915, VON DER LANCKEN TO WHITLOCK, *reaffirming various guarantees and agreements respecting the conduct of relief* (Document 40, chapter ii, is an English translation of the following)

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

J. Nr. V. 121

BRÜSSEL, le 29 juillet 1915

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

J'ai eu l'honneur de recevoir la lettre que Votre Excellence a bien voulu me remettre à la date du 16 juillet dernier concernant le ravitaillement de la Belgique par le Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation.

J'ai été heureux d'apprendre qu'à la suite des démarches que Votre Excellence, ainsi que Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre d'Espagne avaient bien voulu faire, le Gouvernement Britannique a pris l'engagement de faciliter jusqu'à la récolte de 1916 l'importation en Belgique des produits nécessaires à l'alimentation de la population civile belge dans des conditions sur le principe desquelles j'ai déjà eu le plaisir de me mettre d'accord avec Votre Excellence.

J'ai déjà eu l'occasion de faire savoir à Votre Excellence, que Monsieur le Gouverneur Général s'est déclaré d'accord en principe, que l'œuvre du ravitaillement de la Belgique continue exactement, pour le bien de la population de ce pays, dans les conditions qui ont été formulées par les accords intervenus entre le Gouverneur Général et les représentants des puissances neutres.

Quant aux détails de ces accords, je suis heureux de pouvoir faire savoir à Votre Excellence, que Monsieur le Gouverneur Général admet les principes suivants, qui, j'en suis sur, sont les mêmes que ceux admis par Votre Excellence, à savoir:

que l'alimentation et l'entretien de la population civile belge doivent continuer à être séparés de l'alimentation et de l'entretien de l'armée allemande et que les décisions prises en ce sens par Monsieur le Gouverneur Général, d'accord avec Messieurs les Protecteurs seront en tous points executées;

que la population belge tirera seule avantage des secours qui sont distribués par le Comité National;

que le Comité National et la Commission for Relief in Belgium pourront jouir de toute la liberté d'action qui leur est nécessaire pour être à même de remplir la mission qui leur est dévolue par les accords intervenus entre le Gouverneur Général et les représentants des puissances neutres;

que Monsieur le Gouverneur Général ne se servira jamais du Comité National pour forcer la population belge à s'employer au service de l'armée allemande contrairement aux stipulations des conventions de La Haye;

que le Comité National interviendra dans l'achat de la récolte des blés dans le territoire placé sous les ordres de Monsieur le Gouverneur Général en Belgique et que la distribution de ces blés se fera

par les soins du dit Comité de la même manière que la distribution des denrées importées—que de même le Comité continuera à distribuer des secours en nature aux nécessiteux dans les conditions déterminées par les accords antérieurs passés entre le Gouverneur Général et Messieurs les Protecteurs.

J'ai pris note de la communication de Votre Excellence, que le Gouvernement Britannique facilitera en dehors de l'importation des blés, l'importation également de pois, de lard, de haricots, de riz, de saindoux et de maïs pour la consommation humaine, aussi longtemps que l'importation de ces articles ne représente pas le remplacement d'autres articles réquisitionnés par ordre de Monsieur le Gouverneur Général.

J'ai également pris note que Votre Excellence fera communiquer au Gouvernement Britannique les modifications qui pourraient être apportées par Monsieur le Gouverneur Général à l'ensemble du régime déterminé par les accords intervenus entre le Gouverneur Général et Messieurs les Protecteurs.

Conformément à la demande que Votre Excellence veut bien me faire dans Sa lettre, j'ai l'honneur, au nom de Monsieur le Gouverneur Général, de Lui confirmer les assurances et garanties données précédemment et qui sont précisées par les stipulations qui précèdent.

J'ai communiqué à Monsieur le Gouverneur Général l'assurance que Votre Excellence a bien voulu me donner, que l'œuvre patronnée par Elle continuera à exercer son action bienfaisante dans des conditions de stricte neutralité justifiant l'aide et la protection que Monsieur le Gouverneur Général et les autorités placées sous ses ordres n'ont cessé d'apporter à cette institution depuis sa création.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général est heureux de constater que l'assurance renouvelée que Votre Excellence a bien voulu donner à cet effet constitue pour Lui une garantie que le but humanitaire de cette oeuvre pourra être poursuivi sans porter atteinte aux droits qui reviennent à l'occupant du pays et aux intérêts dont il a la charge.

Je saisis cette occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurances de ma haute considération.

(S.) LANCKEN

A Son Excellence
Monsieur Brand Whitlock
Ministre des Etats-Unis d'Amérique
à Bruxelles

[56]

Orders, 6 August 1915, by GOVERNOR-GENERAL, *concerning the requisitioning of the hay crop of 1915 in the Occupation Zone* (Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für die okkupierten Gebiete Belgiens, No. 104. Document 347, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

VERORDNUNG

über die Beschlagnahme des Heues aus dem Erntejahr 1915 in den belgischen Gebietsteilen des General-Gouvernements in Belgien

ART. 1

Die gesamte Ernte von Wiesen- und Kleeheu des Erntejahres 1915, und zwar sowohl die vom ersten Schnitt wie auch die Nachmahd, wird im Bereiche des General-Gouvernements mit der Trennung vom Boden für die Heeresverwaltung beschlagnahmt.

Jeder Unternehmer eines landwirtschaftlichen Betriebs und jeder Käufer von Gras oder Klee auf dem Halm ist verpflichtet, für ordnungsmässige Aberntung zu sorgen.

ART. 2

Soweit nachfolgend nicht anders bestimmt ist, darf durch Vereinbarung oder Vertrag über das beschlagnahmte Heu zu Gunsten dritter Personen keine Verfügung getroffen werden.

Als solche Verfügungen kommen unter anderen in Betracht: Ankauf, Verkauf, Verpfändung, Verschenken, Beleihung.

Ausnahmen von diesem Verbot können die Gouvernements und die Kreischefs bewilligen.

ART. 3

Jeder Unternehmer eines landwirtschaftlichen Betriebes im Bereiche des General-Gouvernements in Belgien, in dem im Erntejahr 1915 Heu erzeugt wurde, oder jeder sonstige Besitzer von Heu aus dem Erntejahr 1915 ist verpflichtet, die zur Erhaltung der beschlagnahmten Vorräte erforderlichen Handlungen vorzunehmen und das Heu mit der Sorgfalt eines ordentlichen Hausvaters zu behandeln.

Er hat:

a) der Heeresverwaltung auf Anfordern sein Heu mit alleiniger Ausnahme des in Art. 6 bezeichneten käuflich zu überlassen, es rechtzeitig anzufahren, zu liefern und zu verladen;

b) den Beauftragten der Heeresverwaltung den Zutritt zu allen Räumen seines Anwesens zum Zweck der Erfüllung iher Dienstaufgabe zu gestatten, ihnen etwa vorhandene Geschäftsbücher vorzulegen und ihnen den Nachweis über den Verbleib des in seinem Betrieb geernteten Heus zu erbringen.

ART. 4

Jedem Unternehmer eines landwirtschaftlichen Betriebes oder sonstigem Besitzer von Heu aus dem Erntejahr 1915 ist jeder Transport von Heu ohne Begleitschein der Heeresverwaltung mit Ausnahme des Transportes vom Feld zum Anwesen verboten.

ART. 5

Nimmt ein Unternehmer eines landwirtschaftlichen Betriebes oder ein sonstiger Besitzer von Heu aus dem Erntejahr 1915 eine der in Art. 1 Abs. II und Art. 3. Abs. I und IIa vorgeschriebenen Handlungen innerhalb einer von der Heeresverwaltung oder in ihrem Auftrage festgesetzten Frist nicht vor, so lässt diese die Handlungen durch Dritte auf Kosten des Unternehmers oder Besitzers vornehmen.

ART. 6

Von der Beschlagnahme bleiben zu Gunsten des Besitzers landwirtschaftlicher Betriebe die zum Füttern seines eigenen Viehstandes erforderlichen Mengen frei.

ART. 7

Die Heeresverwaltung vergütet das von ihr übernommene und rechtzeitig an die von ihr bestimmte Stelle gelieferte Heu je nach Qualität in Grenzen der für die einzelnen Provinzen festgesetzten Höchstpreise.

ART. 8

Wer den Art. 1, II. Abs., Art. 2, 3 oder 4 dieser Verordnung zuwiderhandelt, wird mit Gefängnis bis zu 5 Jahren oder mit Geldstrafe bis zu 20 000 Franken bestraft. Auf beide Strafarten kann nebeneinander erkannt werden. Zugleich kann in den Fällen der Art. 2, 3a oder 4 auf Einziehung des Heues zu Gunsten der Heeresverwaltung erkannt werden.

ART. 9

Zuständig zur Aburteilung sind die deutschen Militärgerichte.

ART. 10

Der Erlass von Ausführungsvorschriften bleibt vorbehalten.

Brüssel, den 6. August 1915

Der Generalgouverneur in Belgien
Freiherr von Bissing,
Generaloberst

A. J. Gen. Gouv. 230/811

[57] DOCUMENT NO. 635

Letter, 4 September 1915, General Government to the C.R.B., *refusing permission to the delegates of the Commission to traverse the Frontier Zones by automobile*

Brussels, 4 September 1915

To the Director,
The Commission for Relief in Belgium

Dear Sir:

In response to your request of the 31st of August, I must inform you that we cannot change the decision of which you were acquainted in response to your request of the 24th of August. The Grenzzonengebiet can be traversed by train or carriage, but not by auto or cycle. It is in the interest of the petitioner himself that we refuse to allow an exemption, since in view of the very strict instructions he would run the risk of being shot by the sentries and patrols.

For the General Government,
(Signed) Scherenberg
Oberstleutnant

Approved:
For the Administrative Head
For the General Government in Belgium
(Signed) [*Signature illegible*]

[*Translation*]

[58] DOCUMENT NO. 636

Letter, 29 October 1915, VON BISSING TO THE C.R.B., *protecting canal boats chartered by the Commission from requisition and agreeing to facilitate the Commission's lighter transportation problem*

BRUSSELS, 29 October 1915

CONCERNING BOATS OF THE COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM

In answer to the communication from the Commission for Relief in Belgium, which was submitted for discussion with Section 1 B on October 26, 1915, I have to reply as follows:

To Item 1—Belgian boats making trips for the Commission for Relief in Belgium shall not be requisitioned for military purposes in the territory of the General Government. An attempt will be made to secure a similar agreement from the Etappen-Inspektion of the Fourth Army.

To Item 2—I shall not request a change in the procedure now in force. According to this arrangement, Belgian ships which were in Holland before October 9th, 1914 may in the case of trips for the Commission for Relief in Belgium return to Holland on the basis of a certificate issued by the German authorities in Holland who are specified in article 38B of the Harbor Office Instructions.

To Item 3—A specific request of one or two gentlemen should be submitted and I will make a decision.

To Item 4—It would probably not be to the interest of Belgium for Belgian boats to be sold to foreigners.

To Item 5—A general bond, the amount to be settled later, must be required from the Commission for Relief in Belgium for all Belgian ships which go to Holland. The details of this bond shall correspond with those arranged with the Kohlenzentrale in Belgium.

To Items 6 and 7—I shall approve any simplification of the method of passing the frontier which is consistent with military interests, and I shall welcome proposals to this end from the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL
(Signed) FREIHERR VON BISSING
Generaloberst

[*Translation*]

[59] DOCUMENT NO. 637

Memorandum, 24 December 1915, by the GENERAL GOVERNMENT, *confirming that exportation of bacon and lard from Belgium is forbidden*

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

V/945

MÉMORANDUM

Le Département Politique a eu l'honneur de recevoir la lettre du 17 courant que la Légation des Etats-Unis d'Amérique a bien voulu

lui adresser au sujet des importations de lard et de saindoux par la Commission for Relief in Belgium. Celle-ci s'est adressée entretemps aux autorités allemandes concernant l'exportation de ces articles vers l'Allemagne et a pu se convaincre qu'en effet cette exportation de la Belgique vers l'Allemagne est défendue. Les autorités allemandes ont chargé le service de surveillance à la frontière à ce que cette défense d'exportation soit strictement observée pour éviter toute violation.

Le Département Politique est heureux de pouvoir donner à la Légation des Etats-Unis d'Amérique la confirmation de ces faits qui sont de nature à permettre à Monsieur Hoover de soutenir ses démarches auprès de Gouvernement Britannique.

BRUXELLES, le 24 décembre 1915

[60] DOCUMENT NO. 638

Letter, 16 February 1916, VON DER LANCKEN TO WHITLOCK, *summarizing and amplifying the guarantees against export and requisition of relief supplies*

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

No V. 1152

BRÜSSEL, den 16 février 1916

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

J'ai l'honneur de faire savoir à Votre Excellence que j'ai communiqué à Monsieur le Gouverneur Général la note que Votre Excellence a bien voulu me faire parvenir en date du 23 janvier 1916, concernant le ravitaillement de la Belgique par le Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général a constaté avec beaucoup de satisfaction que Votre Excellence rend justice aux efforts qu'il a faits pour assurer le bien-être de la population belge. Il a également noté avec plaisir que Votre Excellence apprécie justement les mesures qu'il a prises pour répondre aux engagements contractés par lui dans le but d'assurer le ravitaillement de la Belgique.

Votre Excellence exprime en outre le désir de voir évitées à l'avenir certaines erreurs qui auraient été commises par l'un ou l'autre agent trop zélé ignorant peut-être les intentions et les ordres de Monsieur le Gouverneur Général. Son Excellence est bien décidée à prendre des mesures énergiques pour couper court à des faits de ce genre.

En conséquence et dans le but de créer une situation absolument nette, tout en supprimant toute possibilité de méprises, Monsieur le Gouverneur Général s'est déclaré d'accord à résumer et à élargir ses dispositions précédemment prises en ce sens:

qu'il défendra l'exportation hors du territoire du Gouvernement Général des vivres (y compris les bestiaux), denrées et fourrages servant à l'alimentation humaine et à celle du bétail. Il défendra de même l'exportation hors dudit territoire des semences et des engrais.

Cette défense devra cependant, dans l'intérêt même de la population, subir une limitation pour certains produits du sol belge, constituant pour la plupart des articles de luxe et ayant déjà par le passé été produits en quantités dépassant de beaucoup les besoins de la consommation, tels que chicorées, légumes-primeurs, fruits; l'exportation de ces quantités des produits susvisés restera autorisée à l'avenir.

Votre Excellence, qui connaît bien la Belgique, admettra le bien fondé de cette limitation, d'autant plus que ces denrées existent toujours en quantités abondantes dans le pays, malgré l'exportation qui en a été faite, et que d'autre part la population rurale et le commerce local ont retiré des bénéfices considerables de cette exportation. Cette situation favorable est due en première ligne aux sages mesures prises par Monsieur le Gouverneur Général dans l'intérêt de l'agriculture belge, mesures dont le succès est illustré, entre autres, par les résultats satisfaisants du recensement du bétail effectué récemment par les Administrations Communales de Belgique.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général doit également se réserver le droit découlant de l'article 52 de la Convention de La Haye, à savoir que les provisions de la Belgique doivent pouvoir être mises à contribution pour l'alimentation de l'armée d'occupation placée sous ses ordres dans le territoire belge occupé, et ce "en proportion des ressources du pays" Monsieur le Gouverneur Général se contentera toutefois de faire acheter ces vivres par libres transactions sans contrainte et aux prix courants, contre paiement au comptant, et il tiendra évidemment compte de toutes les concessions, faites antérieurement par lui au sujet de la totalité du blé indigène servant à la panification et de toutes les denrées importées par le Comité National, qui serviront exclusivement à l'alimentation de la population belge.

Concernant le désir que Votre Excellence exprime au sujet des effets d'habillement destinés aux nécessiteux, M. le Gouverneur Général renouvelle les assurances données à Messieurs les Protecteurs dans la lettre du 12 décembre 1914, a savoir que les effets d'habillement importés par le Comité National, ainsi que ceux faits et conservés, dans un but de bienfaisance, dans les ateliers et dépôts belges de ce Comité, restent à l'abri des réquisitions militaires. Il est bien entendu que les tissus, chaussures et les matières premières que le Comité National importera seront couverts par ces mêmes garanties.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général est évidemment toujours prêt à concéder à Messieurs les Protecteurs tout contrôle matériellement nécessaire. Comme par le passé, Son Excellence facilitera autant que possible l'accomplissement des mesures que Messieurs les Protecteurs jugeront opportun de prendre pour exercer ce contrôle, et dans ce but il renouvellera aux organes placés sous ses ordres les instructions qu'il a déjà données.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général est persuadé, en donnant ces nouvelles assurances, d'avoir fait tout ce qu'exige l'intérêt de la population civile belge. Dans l'esprit de Son Excellence la convention proposée doit toutefois avoir pour base nécessaire la condition, d'ailleurs prévue dans la note de Votre Excellence, que Messieurs les Protecteurs donnent à Monsieur le Gouverneur Général, au nom

des Gouvernements qu'Ils représentent, l'assurance que l'Angleterre n'entravera pas le ravitaillement de la Belgique en denrées destinées à l'alimentation humaine ainsi qu'à celle du bétail, et ce pendant toute la durée de l'occupation allemande et dans une mesure à déterminer par le Comité National conformément aux besoins du pays. A cet effet il est nécessaire notamment que l'Angleterre prenne l'engagement de ne plus réquisitionner les navires affrétés par la Commission for Relief in Belgium.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général insiste d'autant plus sur cette condition indispensable qu'une crise dans l'importation des vivres mettrait gravement en danger les intérêts vitaux de la population belge, intérêts dont la sauvegarde décide Monsieur le Gouverneur Général à accorder les garanties précitées.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général éprouvera une sincère satisfaction, si grâce aux efforts de Votre Excellence la convention ci-dessus proposée pouvait entrer en vigueur et contribuer à alléger pour la population de la Belgique le poids des souffrances de la guerre.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Ministre, les assurances de ma haute considération.

(s.) LANCKEN

Son Excellence
Monsieur Brand Whitlock
Ministre des Etats-Unis d'Amérique
Bruxelles

[61] DOCUMENT NO. 639

Letter, 7 March 1916, GENERAL GOVERNMENT TO THE C.R.B., *granting permission to C.R.B. delegates to make inspection trips in the Frontier Zones when accompanied by a German officer*

BRUSSELS, 7 March 1916

To the Commission for Relief in Belgium,
Brussels

According to a decree of the Governor General concerning the regulation of the traffic of the C.R.B. members to the "Grenzzonengebiet" it is possible for the delegates of the C.R.B. of the provinces in question to undertake, accompanied by an officer or an official of the province in question, the necessary inspection trips to the "Grenzzonengebiet."

You are requested to instruct your delegates that they report themselves to the Governor before they wish to make the trip to the "Grenzzonengebiet," if possible one day before the intended trip, in order that from there an accompanying officer or official may be designed.

You are respectfully requested to limit the trips to the "Grenzzonengebiet" to the necessary minimum.

For the General Government,
(Signed) MERTON

[*Translation*]

[62] DOCUMENT NO. 640

Letter, 8 March 1916, General Government to Whitlock, *permitting delegates of the C.R.B. and C.N. to circulate in the Frontier Zones in automobiles if accompanied by a German official*

Brussels, 8 March 1916

To His Excellency
Mr. Brand Whitlock,
Minister of the United States of America,
Brussels

Dear Sir:

I had the honor to receive the letter which you were so kind as to address me under date of February 19th, with regard to the special situation in which the Regional and Local Committees are placed in the Frontier Zone, in that, as a result of arrangements made by the military authorities, they have been prevented from remaining in constant touch with the Provincial Committee of Luxembourg.

I immediately took the necessary steps with the competent authorities, but I am sorry to be compelled to inform you that the military authorities are not as yet able to allow the inhabitants of the Frontier Zone permission to pass from there into the territory of the General Government. It seems probable, however, that such freedom will be allowed them in a short time. In the meantime, in order to aid the Comité National as far as possible in the humanitarian object which it has in view, I have succeeded in obtaining such freedom for the members of the Comité National and the Commission for Relief in Belgium, providing they are residing in the territory of the General Government and are provided with passports allowing them to circulate in automobiles. In cases of absolute necessity they may enter the Frontier Zone in automobile, under condition that they are accompanied by an officer or a civil functionary. When such occasion arises, the members of the Comité National and the C.R.B. are requested to apply to the Military Governor of the appropriate province, who will detail for the purpose mentioned either an officer or a civil functionary.

It has, however, not been possible to obtain permission to carry documents or letters, culinary recipes or relief funds, in these trips through the Frontier Zone. In view, however, of the great difficulties which would ensue for the humanitarian work of the Comité National, the competent authorities have been so kind as to accede to my request that the Civil Commissary of the competent arrondissement undertake the transmission of the correspondence and funds in question.

I take the liberty of suggesting to you that you kindly inform the Comité National of this arrangement.

I take this occasion to renew the assurance of my high esteem.

(Signed) Lancken
General Government in Belgium

[*Translation*]

[63] DOCUMENT NO. 641

Letter, 20 March 1916, GENERAL GOVERNMENT TO THE C.R.B., *granting protection to herds of milch-cows which it was proposed to establish*

BRUSSELS, 20 March 1916

To the Commission for Relief in Belgium,
For Mr. W. B. Poland,
Brussels

In the conversation which I had the pleasure of having with you on March 7th, and of which you sent me a memorandum under date of March 9th, you asked me to request of the General Government in your behalf that the Governor General decree freedom from requisition for the herds of milch-cows which you propose to establish in considerable numbers throughout the entire country.

The General Government, to whom this request of yours has been presented, has decided that it is willing to grant the principle of your request, provided the number of animals you propose remains within reasonable bounds. You are requested to apply for exemption from requisition in each individual case.

With the assurance of my highest respect

(Signed) MERTON
For the General Government

[*Translation*]

[64]

Letter, 14 April 1916, VON DER LANCKEN TO WHITLOCK, *stating that the Governor-General has forbidden the export of all foodstuffs (including animal), produce, and fodder* (Document 83, chapter iii, is an English translation of the following)

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

J. No V. 1432

BRÜSSEL, den 14 avril 1916

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

J'ai l'honneur de faire savoir à Votre Excellence que j'ai communiqué à Monsieur le Gouverneur Général la note que Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre d'Espagne a bien voulu me faire parvenir en date du 7 avril 1916, tant au Nom de Votre Excellence et de M. le Chargé d'Affaires des Pays-Bas qu'au sien propre, concernant le ravitaillement de la Belgique par le Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général m'a chargé d'exprimer à Votre Excellence les sentiments de gratitude qu'il éprouve pour la sollicitude incessante qu'Elle n'a pas cessé de témoigner depuis bientot 20

mois à l'oeuvre humanitaire dont Elle a bien voulu accepter le Patronage de concert avec Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre d'Espagne, et Monsieur le Chargé d'Affaires des Pays-Bas. Monsieur le Gouverneur Général est persuadé que la population belge toute entière partage ces sentiments.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général a constaté avec beaucoup de plaisir que les démarches entreprises par Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre d'Espagne, tant au Nom de Votre Excellence et de Monsieur le Chargé d'Affaires des Pays-Bas qu'au sien propre, ont eu pour effet d'amener le Gouvernement Anglais à ne pas arrêter le ravitaillement de la population civile en Belgique. Son Excellence s'est montrée d'autant plus satisfaite de ce résultat que les exigences nouvelles formulées récemment par le Gouvernement Anglais et qui constituaient une menace sérieuse pour la continuation de ce ravitaillement, avaient pour point de départ des renseignements erronés suivant lesquels les autorités dans le territoire administré par Monsieur le Gouverneur Général n'auraient pas respecté les engagements pris par Son Excellence vis-à-vis des puissances neutres. Votre Excellence est à même de constater et de réfuter sans plus l'inexactitude de cette assertion. Monsieur le Gouverneur Général se rappelle en effet avec satisfaction que Votre Excellence, ainsi que Ses Honorés Collègues, a bien voulu reconnaître maintes fois et en dernier lieu dans Sa note du 23 janvier 1916 l'attitude correcte observée par les autorités sous ses ordres dans l'exécution des conventions conclues par lui.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général s'étant encore montré récemment disposé, au mépris de certains intérêts allemands, à renoncer au droit, découlant incontestablement pour lui de la Convention de La Haye, d'alimenter l'armée d'occupation au moyen des provisions belges, Votre Excellence voudra bien se rendre compte par ce fait de l'intérêt que Monsieur le Gouverneur Général porte au bien-être de la population du pays qu'il administre.

Comme suite aux négociations du mois de février écoulé et contrairement aux informations du Gouvernement Anglais, Monsieur le Gouverneur Général a déjà formulé, à la date du premier mars, une défense d'exportation pour les vivres et les fourrages. Conformément a l'ensemble des assurances données en dernier lieu au Gouvernement que Votre Excellence représente, Monsieur le Gouverneur Général résumera et complètera les mesures déjà prises en ce sens par des instructions nouvelles *défendant l'exportation hors du territoire du Gouvernement Général des vivres (y compris les bestiaux) denrées et fourrages servant à l'alimentation humaine et à celle du bétail. Il défendra de même l'exportation hors dudit territoires des semences, des engrais et des approvisionnements agricoles.* Cette defense ne s'appliquera qu'aux produits d'origine belge, étant entendu notamment que les produits d'origine allemande se trouvant actuellement dans les dépôts de l'administration militaire pourront être exportés. En dehors des autorisations qui pourront être accordées à la Commission for Relief in Belgium pour l'exportation hors du territoire du Gouvernement Général vers le Nord de la France de vivres, bétail et fourrages dont il y aurait un excédent sur les besoins de la consommation, la défense précitée ne souffrira pas

d'exceptions; la réserve convenue par Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre d'Espagne avec le Gouvernement Anglais étant toutefois ici faite pour les quantités de certains produits du sol belge dépassant les besoins de la population du territoire occupé de la Belgique.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général donnera également à l'Intendance Militaire du Gouvernement Général pour les effects conséquents l'ordre de ne plus ni réquisitionner ni acheter par libres transactions, dans le territoire occupé de la Belgique, pour les besoins de l'armée d'occupation, aucun des produits ci-dessus mentionnés. Comme Votre Excellence a pu se convaincre au cours des négociations ayant eu lieu dernièrement, Monsieur le Gouverneur Général attache la plus grande importance à ce qu'une situation définitive et nette soit créée. C'est donc avec une vive satisfaction que j'ai déduit de la note que Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre d'Espagne a bien voulu me faire parvenir que Votre Excellence, en Sa qualité de Réprésentant de Son Gouvernement, ne considérera pas des achats occasionnels de ces produits faits individuellement par des personnes appartenant à l'armée comme étant contraires à l'engagement pris par Monsieur le Gouverneur Général, pour autant que ces achats ne soient aucunement systématiques ni effectués pour compte de l'Intendance Militaire.

Ayant ainsi élargi les obligations contractées précédement par lui envers les trois puissances neutres concernant le territoire qu'il administre, Monsieur le Gouverneur Général est persuadé que de son côté le Gouvernement que Votre Excellence représente assume vis-à-vis de lui la garantie que dorénavant le Gouvernement Britannique renonce définitivement à entraver par des réquisitions de navires ou de toute autre manière le ravitaillement de la population civile en Belgique. Je prie Votre Excellence de bien vouloir se faire autoriser par Son Gouvernement à confirmer le bien fondé de cette manière de voir.

Votre Excellence est à même de se rendre compte que les stipulations de cette convention et de toutes celles conclues précédemment avec le Gouvernement représenté par Votre Excellence sont consciencieusement observées par les autorités et les troupes sous les ordres de Son Excellence. Monsieur le Gouverneur Général est toujours prêt à aider Votre Excellence de toutes les manières possibles dans l'accomplissement de cette tâche. Il croit pouvoir exprimer l'espoir que Votre Excellence voudra bien faire connaître dans les pays neutres et belligérants les constatations qu'Elle a déjà faites et qu'Elle pourra encore faire à ce sujet pour réfuter les insinuations tendancieuses qui apparaissent constamment dans ces pays et qui ne peuvent que nuire à l'oeuvre dont Elle a bien voulu assumer le Protectorat. Soucieux d'écarter de cette oeuvre toute ingérence non justifiable des puissances en guerre avec l'Allemagne et désirant éviter tout rapport avec celles-ci, Monsieur le Gouverneur Général continuera à s'addresser à Votre Excellence dans toutes les questions y relatives.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général a noté avec satisfaction que Votre Excellence veillera à ce que l'oeuvre de secours et d'alimentation placés sous Son Patronage soit maintenue strictement endéans les limites tracées à son activité. Ceci permettra à Monsieur le Gouver-

neur Général d'accorder comme par le passé toute son aide et toute sa protection au Comité National et à la Commission for Relief in Belgium que Votre Excellence patronne, pour permetter aux Membres de ces deux organisations de continuer les efforts qu'ils ont accomplis jusqu'ici avec tant de dévouement dans leur oeuvre humanitaire et bienfaisante, destinée à alléger, pour la population de la Belgique le poids des souffrances de la guerre.

Je saisis cette occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurances de ma haute considération.

(S.) LANCKEN

[65] DOCUMENT NO. 642

Proclamation, 22 April 1916, by VON BISSING, *forbidding the exportation from Belgium of native foodstuffs, fodder, animals for slaughter, seeds, fertilizers, and agricultural machinery*

AVIS

En vue d'assurer l'alimentation de la population et de complèter les mesures que j'ai déjà prises à cette fin, j'ai décidé d'interdire désormais dans le territoire placé sous mon autorité, l'exportation de tous les produits alimentaires et fourrages, y compris les bêtes de boucherie et, en outre, des semences de tout genre, des engrais ainsi que de l'outillage agricole. Tous ces produits, à la condition qu'ils soient de provenance belge, seront donc réservés à la consommation de la population du territoire dépendant de mon administration. Il ne sera fait exception à cette interdiction que pour les quantités superflues de produits belges provenant du sol. Je ne permets cette seule exception que pour ne pas porter préjudice à l'agriculture, à la culture maraîchère et au commerce intérieur qui pratiquait déjà l'exportation avant la guerre. Afin de ménager plus encore les approvisionnements du territoire occupé, j'ai ordonné à l'intendance militaire de n'effectuer, dans le territoire placé sous mon autorité, ni réquisitions, ni achats de gré à gré de produits rentrant dans les catégories susmentionées et destinés à assurer la subsistance de l'armée d'occupation, bien que l'art. 52 de la Convention de la Haye me confère incontestablement le droit de nourrir les troupes de l'armée d'occupation au moyen des vivres existant en Belgique. Les troupes d'occupation étant réparties sur tout le pays, je n'ai pas l'intention d'interdire les achats individuels des personnes appartenant à l'armée; je ne désire pas priver le commerce local des bénéfices qui en résultent pour lui.

En portant les présentes dispositions à la connaisance du public, je tiens à faire observer que toutes les mesures déjà prises et celles que je jugerai bon de prendre encore, ont et auront pour but principal d'obtenir une répartition équitable de tous les produits alimentaires et fourrages, afin que l'alimentation du peuple belge soit assurée quoi qu'il arrive, notamment si, à l'avenir, l'importation des denrées alimentaires recontrait des difficultés ou était entravées.

(s.) VON BISSING

BRUXELLES, le 22 Avril 1916

[66] DOCUMENT NO. 643

Letter, 10 May 1916, General Government to the C.R.B., *stating regulations regarding chartering of tugs*

Brussels, 10 May 1916

To the Commission for Relief in Belgium
Brussels

In order in the future to avoid conflicts, in the matter of Belgian tugs, between your interests and those of the various military authorities, you are requested, before you time-charter Belgian tugs, to inform us of your intention, in order that the proper authorities may be given opportunity to declare whether they renounce the right of seizure of the vessel in question for a shorter or a longer period.

When the time-charter for Belgian tugs agreed to by us expires, you are requested in each case, before renewing a contract, to inform us, in order to again give the proper authorities opportunity to agree to a further time-chartering of the vessel in question.

In this connection we wish to say that the proper authorities will, of course, continue to exert themselves to assist you at all points, as far as is consistent with military interests.

In order to clear the matter up, you are requested to submit to us a list of the Belgian tugs now time-chartered by you, indicating the dates at which the charter-contracts expire.

We are of course referring only to such Belgian tugs as are domiciled in Belgium. Belgian tugs which are domiciled in Holland and which have not deposited a security and which you time-charter from there for your transport-service, which therefore receive a green return-certificate, are in accordance with the agreement exempted from seizure in every case.

(Signed) Bruhn
General Government in Belgium

[*Translation*]

[67]

Decree, 8 July 1916, by Governor-General, *concerning the bread-grains harvest of 1916 in the Occupation Zone* (Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für die okkupierten Gebiete Belgiens, No. 235. Document 350, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

. . . . . .

2

Verordnung

über die Beschlagnahme des Brotgetreides

§ 1

Das im Bereich des Generalgouvernements im Erntejahr 1916 angebaute Brotgetreide aller Art wie: Roggen, Weizen, Spelz wird, gleich-

viel ob ungemengt oder mit anderen Getreiden vermengt mit der Trennung vom Boden zugunsten der Zivilbevölkerung im Bereich des Generalgouvernements hiermit beschlagnahmt. Die Beschlagnahme erstreckt sich auch auf das aus beschlagnahmtem Brotgetreide ermahlene Mehl und die daraus hergestellten Backwaren. Mit dem Ausdreschen wird das Stroh, mit der Ausmahlung die Kleie von dieser Beschlagnahme frei.

Die Beschlagnahme erstreckt sich auf das Getreide und Mahl früherer Erntejahre, auch soweit dieses zur Selbsternährung oder Verfütterung bestimmt war, aber diesem Zwecke nicht zugeführt ist.

§ 2

An den beschlagnahmten Vorräten dürfen, soweit sich aus den folgenden Bestimmungen nicht etwas anderes ergibt, weder Veränderungen vorgenommen werden, noch darf durch Vereinbarung oder Vertrag über sie verfügt werden.

§ 3

Der Besitzer beschlagnahmter Vorräte ist berechtigt und verpflichtet, alle zur Erhaltung der Vorräte erforderlichen Handlungen vorzunehmen, er ist berechtigt und verpflichtet auszudreschen. Er ist verpflichtet, wahrheitsgetreue Angaben über seine Brotgetreidevorräte zu machen.

§ 4

Nimmt der Besitzer beschlagnahmter Vorräte eine zur Erhaltung derselben erforderliche Handlung innerhalb einer ihm von der zuständigen Behörde gesetzten Frist nicht vor, so kann diese die Handlung auf Kosten des Besitzers durch einen Dritten vornehmen lassen. Das Gleiche gilt, wenn der Besitzer das Brotgetreide nicht innerhalb einer ihm von der zuständigen Provinzial-Ernte-Kommission gesetzten Frist ausdrischt.

§ 5

a) Wer beschlagnahmte Vorräte unbefugt beiseite schafft oder aus der Gemeinde, in der sie beschlagnahmt sind, unbefugt entfernt, wer sie beschädigt, zerstört, verheimlicht, unbefugt verarbeitet oder verbraucht,

b) wer beschlagnahmte Vorräte unbefugt verkauft, kauft oder ein anderes Veräusserungs- oder Erwerbsgeschäft über sie abschliesst,

c) wer den Verpflichtungen des § 3 dieser Verordnung zuwiderhandelt,

wird mit Gefängnis bis zu 5 Jahren oder mit Geldstrafe bis zu 20 000 Mark bestraft; auch kann auf Einziehung der zu strafbaren Handlungen gebrauchten Vorräte erkannt werden.

Zuständig sind die deutschen Militärbefehlshaber und die Militärgerichte.

§ 6

Das beschlagnahmte Getreide wird gegen Barzahlung angekauft und der Bevölkerung im Bereiche des Generalgouvernements in Form von Brot, Mehl und Kleie zugeführt werden. Die Verwendung von

freigegebenem Brotgetreide zu anderen Zwecken, als zur Herstellung von Brot ist von Fall zu Fall von der Zustimmung der Zentral-Ernte-Kommission abhängig.

§ 7

Ich erteile dem Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation das alleinige Recht zum Ankauf der beschlagnahmten Vorräte auch aus der Brotgetreideernte 1916 und etwaiger Restbestände an Brotgetreide aus früheren Erntejahren zu einem Einheitspreise, den ich festsetzen werde. Die Beschlagnahme wird durch diesen Ankauf nicht aufgehoben.

§ 8

Ich behalte mir vor, im Bedarfsfalle bis zu 10 000 To des beschlagnahmten Getreides anteilmässig an die von mir zu bestimmenden Stellen zwecks Verarbeitung zu Malzkaffee zu überweisen.

§ 9

Der Erlass von Ausführungsbestimmungen bleibt vorbehalten.

Der Generalgouverneur in Belgien
Freiherr von Bissing
Generaloberst

Brüssel, den 8. Juli 1916

Z.E.K. 3765b

[68] DOCUMENT NO. 644

Letter, 7 August 1916, General Government to the C.R.B., *granting permission to the Commission's representatives to travel in the Frontier Zones without being accompanied by a German officer*

General-Gouvernement
in Belgien
Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle C.N.

Geschäftsnummer 5562

Brüssel, den 7. August 1916

Es wird hierdurch mitgeteilt, dass den Mitgliedern der Commission for Relief in Belgium bis auf weiteres gestattet wird, die Grenzzonen-Gebiete ohne die Begleitung eines deutschen Offiziers zu befahren. Die Einfahrt in die Grenzzonen-Gebiete darf jedoch nur auf den für den allgemeinen Verkehr zugelassenen Durchlässen erfolgen, und es darf nicht der an der belgischen Grenze befindliche Drahtzaun passiert werden.

(Signed) Bruhn

An die
Commission for Relief in Belgium
Brüssel

[69] DOCUMENT NO. 645

Letter, 21 August 1916, VON DER LANCKEN TO WHITLOCK, *enclosing final agreement in regard to fertilizers and confirming reservations pertaining thereto*

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien
J.No.V 2119

BRÜSSEL, den 21 août 1916

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

J'ai l'honneur d'accuser réception à Votre Excellence de la lettre qu'Elle a bien voulu m'adresser le 16 de ce mois, sous le N° 3350, et je constate avec plaisir qu'à présent un accord définitif concernant les conventions relatives aux engrais a été obtenu. Dans le texte définitif des conventions susdites, dont un exemplaire est joint à cette lettre, j'ai pris la liberté d'insérer le 25 août 1916 comme date où les conventions entrent en vigueur.

En outre, j'ai l'honneur de confirmer que Votre Excellence comme moi-même, s'est réservé le droit de dénoncer les conventions susvisées, étant entendu qu'une dénonciation entre en vigueur après le délai d'un mois. Dans le cas où les conventions sont dénoncées par une des parties contractantes, il va sans dire que les accords conclus en avril 1916 entre Son Excellence Monsieur le Gouverneur Général et Messieurs les Ministres protecteurs du Comité National concernant l'exportation des produits indigènes seront à nouveau appliqués aux engrais.

Je saisis cette occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurances de ma haute considération.

(S.) LANCKEN

Son Excellence
Monsieur Brand Whitlock
Ministre des Etats-Unis d'Amérique
Bruxelles

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

CONVENTIONS RELATIVES AUX MATIÈRES PREMIÈRES QUI PEUVENT SERVIR À LA FABRICATION DES ENGRAIS

Les arrangements intervenus le 17 avril entre le Gouvernement Général et les Ministres des Puissances neutres stipulent notamment: "Que son Excellence Monsieur le Gouverneur Général défendra l'exportation hors du territoire du Gouvernement Général des semences,

des engrais et des approvisionnements agricoles. Cette défense ne s'appliquera qu'aux produits d'origine belge, étant entendu notamment que les produits d'origine allemande se trouvant actuellement dans les dépôts de l'administration militaire pourront être exportés.

"La réserve convenue par Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre d'Espagne avec le Gouvernement anglais étant toutefois ici faite pour les quantités de certains produits du sol belge dépassant les besoins de la population du territoire occupé de la Belgique."

L'acide sulfurique qui est indispensable pour la fabrication des engrais devant être fourni par les autorités occupantes et en majeure partie importé d'Allemagne, il a été jugé utile dans l'intérêt de l'agriculture et de l'industrie belges, de préciser les arrangements ci-dessus de la façon suivante:

Art. I. Phosphate brut. Les quantités de phosphates bruts existant en Belgique étant considérables et l'emploi de ce produit comme engrais étant limité en Belgique, il en exists un excédent.

En conséquence, les phosphates bruts pourront être exportés vers l'Allemagne en quantités ne dépassant pas 10.000 tonnes par mois et après que la consommation de l'agriculture belge et des fabricants belges aura été entièrement satisfaite.

Par contre, l'importation de sels de potasse d'Allemagne en Belgique continuera à être facilitée comme par le passé (en 1915 on en a importé 50.000 tonnes, en 1916, 40.000 tonnes).

Art. II. Sulfate d'ammoniaque. Les autorités occupantes mettront mensuellement â la disposition des usines à gaz et des fours à coke 1.100 tonnes d'acide sulfurique à 60° Baumé.

Les 1.100 tonnes de sulfate d'ammoniaque produites au moyen de ces 1.100 tonnes d'acide seront réparties à raison de 600 tonnes pour la Belgique et 500 tonnes pour l'Allemagne.

Toutes les eaux ammoniacales produites en Belgique seront traitées sur place pour la fabrication des engrais; à cet effet, sur le contingent total d'acide mis à la disposition des fabricants belges d'ammoniaque, les 1.100 tonnes ci-dessus seront prélevées en première part.

Si les quantités d'acide pour la fabrication du sulfate ou les quantités de sulfate produites étaient plus importantes ou moins importantes que 1.100 tonnes, le sulfate serait partagé à raison de 6/11 pour la Belgique et 5/11 pour l'Allemagne.

Art. III. Superphosphate. Les autorités occupantes mettront mensuellement à la disposition des fabricants de superphosphates 2.500 tonnes d'acide à 60° (ou l'équivalent de ces quantités si le titre de l'acide est plus élevé ou moins élevé que 60°, le minimum du titre de l'acide étant de 50°).

Les produits fabriqués seront répartis comme suit:

3.000 tonnes de superphosphate pour la Belgique.

1.2000 tonnes de superphosphate double pour l'Allemagne.

Si les fournitures d'acide sont plus importantes ou moins importantes que 2.500 tonnes, les contingents belges et allemands de produits fabriqués seront augmentés ou diminués proportionnellement.

Art. IV. Poudre d'os calcinés. Les os calcinés des abattoirs militaires seront envoyés en Allemagne et les os calcinés provenant des abattoirs civils resteront en Belgique.

Art. V. En ce qui concerne les *phosphates Rhénania* qui sont fabriqués au moyen de matières premières importées d'Allemagne et de la partie occupée de la France, ainsi que des résidus belges, sur le contingent total fabriqué, on tiendra à la disposition de l'agriculture belge: 1.100 tonnes par mois.

Art. VI. La convention entrera en vigueur le 25 août 1916 étant entendu que les contingents d'engrais (sulfate d'ammoniaque et super) fabriqués jusqu'au 25 août et ceux existant à cette date seront répartis conformément au mode de répartition antérieur.

Art. VII. L'acide sulfurique sera de bonne qualité et apte à la fabrication d'engrais de qualité marchande. Le prix de cet acide sera tel qu'il permette la fabrication des engrais sous des conditions économiques.

Art. VIII. Toutes les quantités de phosphates basiques produites par les aciéries belges seront réservées à l'agriculture belge.

Art. IX. La répartition des engrais fabriqués qui sont destinés à l'agriculture belge se fera, jusqu'à nouvel avis par les soins de la section agricole du C.N. comme cela se fait déjà actuellement pour la répartition du sulfate.

Art. X. Le Département Politique transmettra aux Ministres Protecteurs un rapport trimestriel relatif à l'exécution de la présente convention.

[70] DOCUMENT NO. 646

Letter, 10 November 1916, General Government to the C.R.B., *relating to possible seizure of newly added lighters*

Brussels, 10 November 1916

To the Commission for Relief in Belgium,
Brussels

Re: Bought or Hired Lighters

Referring to our letter of November 5th, No. 7936, we wish to point out that the charter of lighters which have been further taken on since the 5th inst., has not been objected to. This does, however, not preclude the possibility that under certain circumstances the General Government will requisition these newly added lighters, since they do not come under the earlier promise that lighters of the C.R.B. shall be exempt from requisition.

(Signed) Schlubach
Rittmeister
General Government in Belgium

[*Translation*]

[71] DOCUMENT NO. 647

Letter, 20 December 1916, GENERAL GOVERNMENT TO THE C.R.B., *exempting from requisition 2,225 horses required by the relief organization but limiting them to those unsuited for war service and marked with the brand "C.R.B."*

BRUSSELS, 20 December 1916

Commission for Relief in Belgium,

RE: REQUISITION OF HORSES

According to the understanding arrived at with the competent authorities the stock of approximately 2,225 horses within the territory of the General Government, which are being used for the services of the C.R.B. and C.N., will be exempt from requisition, if the following conditions are filled:

1. In the different branches of labor only such horses can be made use of which are not suited for war purposes. It is therefore necessary that all horses fit for war purposes must in due course of time be changed for such as are unfit. The requisition commission always has an owner of a horse which is fit for war purposes and is to be requisitioned notified about four weeks before the time of the requisition, so that sufficient time is given for the change.

2. The horses unfit for war service and used by the C.R.B., i.e. the C.N., will be marked with a brand, probably the mark "C.R.B. No. —," and besides entered in a list of the authorities.

3. Inasmuch as a misuse of the brand cannot be prevented it will be necessary that these horses, declared unfit for war purposes, shall be brought every time to the mustering when one is to take place. They shall, however, be the first taken for mustering and compared with the list in the hands of the authorities. Should everything be found to be in order then a further examination shall not be made, so that the whole mustering of the horses of the C.R.B., i.e. the C.N., will be finished in the least possible time.

According to the information which has reached the V.C.N. there are a sufficient number of horses in the territory of the General Government which are unfit for the war purposes but which would really be very serviceable for the work of the C.R.B. and the C.N. The authorities will also not make any difficulties if horses after being purchased are taken from one district for work in another district, provided that the prescribed permission be obtained first.

Before the brand suggested in paragraph No. 2 can be made use of it will be necessary that an appropriate order be obtained from the General Government for the entire territory of the General Government so that the use of it by others will be prohibited.

(Signed) BRUHN

For the General Government

[*Translation*]

[72] DOCUMENT NO. 648

Letter, 25 January 1917, General Government to the C.R.B., *granting permission for the importation of Dutch foodstuffs*

Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle C.N.

No. 9981

Brüssel, den 25. Januar 1917

Unter Bezugnahme auf die Herrn Professor Dr. Kellogg bereits mündlich gemachte Mitteilung, wird die C.R.B. hierdurch ergebenst davon in Kenntnis gesetzt, dass nach neuerlicher Entscheidung der für den Aussenhandel zuständigen Behörden die Einfuhr durch die C.R.B. auch für Erzeugnisse holländischen Ursprungs bis auf weiteres grundsätzlich zugelassen ist. Entsprechende Anträge sind bei dem Delegierten des Generalgouvernements in Belgien bei der Kaiserlich Deutschen Gesandtschaft im Haag beziehungsweise dessen Beauftragten in Rotterdam einzureichen. Seine Anweisungen bezüglich des Einkaufs und des Ursprungsnachweises der Waren sind zu befolgen.

Hinsichtlich der Verteilung solcher Lebens- und Futtermittel, die innerhalb der besetzten Gebiete einer behördlichen Bewirtschaftung unterliegen, bleibt Vereinbarung vorbehalten.

(gez.) Bruhn

An die Commission for Relief in Belgium
Brüssel

[73] DOCUMENT NO. 649

Letter, 12 May 1917, General Government to the C.R.B., *binding itself not to requisition lighters from Holland and agreeing to permit the Belgian crews to return to Holland*

General-Gouvernement
in Belgien
Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle C.N.

Geschäftsnummer 13231

Brüssel, den 12. Mai 1917

Das General-Gouvernement in Belgien (Sektion I *b* Nr.2413) verpflichtet sich unterm 9. Mai 1917,

1) dass die in der Liste der C.R.B. genannten, in Sluis liegenden 55 Leichter, falls sie für die C.R.B. in das besetzte Gebiet einfahren, nicht beschlagnahmt werden und jederzeit nach Holland zurückkehren können;

2) dass ebenfalls die belgischen Besatzungen dieser Fahrzeuge, auch wenn sie im militärpflichtigen Alter stehen, jederzeit nach Holland zurückkehren können, sofern sie sich den deutschen Behörden gegenüber nicht straffällig machen.

Der Generalquartiermeister im Grossen-Hauptquartier hat die gleiche Zusage für die Etappeninspektionen gegeben.

Es wird gebeten, die auf Grund dieser Zusage von der C.R.B. gemieteten Schiffe der eingesandten Liste sowie ihre Besatzungen von Fall zu Fall der V.C.N. aufzugeben.

I. A.
(gez.) ANDERSEN
Rittmeister

An die
Commission for Relief in Belgium,
Brüssel

[74] DOCUMENT NO. 650

Letter, 17 May 1917, VON DER LANCKEN TO THE DUTCH CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES, *stating conditions for the import and distribution of Dutch seed potatoes in Belgium*

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

J.No V. 3176

BRUXELLES, le 17 Mai 1917

MONSIEUR LE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES,

J'ai honneur de me référer aux entretiens qui ont lieu récemment avec vous ainsi qu'avec des membres de la C.R.B. et du C.N. au sujet de l'importation et de la répartition dans le territoire du Gouvernement Général de plants de pommes de terre de provenance hollandaise. Me référant en mème temps à la lettre adressée par la "Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle C.N." à la Commission for Relief in Belgium le 25 janvier dernier, dont copie est jointe à la présente, j'ai l'honneur de porter ci-après à Votre connaissance le résultat de ces entretiens en Vous priant de bien vouloir me communiquer Votre accord avec celui-ci.

1) La C.R.B. fera parvenir, conformément à la lettre ci-annexée, les demandes respectives pour l'importation de plants de pommes de terre au Délégué du Gouverneur Général en Belgique près la Légation Impériale à la Haye et suivra ses instructions quant à l'achat et la preuve d'origine.

2) La Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle C.N. se mettra d'accord avec la C.R.B. vers quelles gares les plants de pommes de terre seront transportés, dans le territoire du Gouvernement Général ainsi que dans les régions d'étapes et d'opérations. A cette fin, la C.R.B. fera parvenir à V.C.N. une liste contenant les noms des gares proposées par elle ainsi que les quantitées à y être transportées.

La V.C.N. s'entendra ensuite, les cas échéant, avec la C.R.B. au sujet de modifications éventuelles à y apporter.

3) La Ligue du Coin de Terre indiquera au Commissaire Civil compétent les Oeuvres locales auxquelles les pommes de terre seront remises pour la plantation ainsi que les communes, où celle-ci aura

lieu. Elle renseignera les quantités qui reviendront à chacune d'elles ainsi que les quantités qui seront plantées dans chaque commune à indiquer.

4) La C.R.B. et le C.N. ne feront valoir aucun droit sur la récolte provenant des plants de pommes de terre en question. Les pommes de terre produites sont soumises aux arrêtés ayant trait à la récolte des pommes de terre indigènes. Les autorités compétentes s'engagent cependant à mettre à la disposition des sous-organisations désignées par le C.N. une quantité de pommes de terre de la récolte indigène, rentrée en même temps que celle des pommes de terre hollandaises, représentant huit fois la quantité de ces dernières. Les pommes de terre provenant de plants importés laissées aux colons de la Ligue du Coin de Terre, conformément aux arrêtés, doivent être préalablement déduites de la quantité mise à la disposition de la manière susdite. Le C.N. veillera à ce que ses sous-organisations n'emploient les pommes de terre ainsi mises à leur disposition que pour l'Oeuvre de la Soupe Communale endéans des communes indiquées.

Si le C.N. a besoin, pour sa Soupe Communale et ses Oeuvres de Bienfaisance, d'une quantité de pommes de terre plus grande que celle libérée il indiquera aux Autorités compétentes les quantités necessaires.

5) Les conventions énumérées au 3) et 4) ont trait au territoire du Gouvernement Général; celles indiquées aux 1) et 2) se rapportent aussi aux régions d'étapes et d'opérations.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Chargé d'Affaires, les assurances de ma haute considération.

(s.) LANCKEN

[75] DOCUMENT NO. 651

Letter, 4 June 1917, GENERAL GOVERNMENT TO THE SPANISH LEGATION, *freeing from requisition wine, incense-wax, and sanctuary-oil imported by the C.R.B. to fulfill the needs of the Catholic Church*

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

J.No V.2906

BRUXELLES, le 4 juin 1917

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

J'ai l'honneur d'accuser réception à Votre Excellence de la lettre qu'Elle a bien voulu m'adresser le 29 mars dernier, concernant la libération de réquisition pour le vin de messe, la cire d'encens et l'huile de Sanctuaire importés par la Commission for Relief.

Monsieur le Gouverneur Général auquel j'ai soumis le désir exprimé par Votre Excellence a décidé que les produits susmentionnés importés par la C.R.B. et destinés à être employés pour les besoins du culte catholique dans le territoire placé sous ses ordres seront exonérés de toute réquisition.

Je profite de l'occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurances de ma haute considération.

(S.) LANCKEN

Son Excellence le Marquis
de Villalobar,
Ministre de Sa Majesté le Roi d'Espagne,
Bruxelles

[76]

Order, 13 November 1917, by VON FALKENHAUSEN, *covering the 1917 crop in Belgium* (Document 351, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Briefnummer V. 4278

BRUXELLES, le 13 novembre 1917

MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS,

Je me permets de Vous envoyer en suite à notre conversation d'hier une note résumant le contenu d'un ordre de service que Monsieur le Gouverneur Général a envoyé à toutes les autorités tant à Bruxelles que dans les provinces pour rappeler à nouveau les conventions existantes et insister sur leur stricte observation. Cette mesure a été prise pour parer notamment aux inconvénients que présentent, pour l'observation des ces conventions, les déplacements assez fréquents des officers et fonctionnaires dans les provinces. Elle répond, je pense, à Vos intentions.

En même temps et en application de cet ordre, les divers services centraux intéressés ont renouvelé à leurs sous-ordres en province des instructions détaillées au sujet de l'application des diverses clauses des conventions et des mesures à prendre pour éviter que des contreventions éventuellement constatées ne se reproduisent.

J'espère que ces mesures contribueront à faire disparaître les appréhensions que Vous auriez pu éprouver au sujet de la volonté très ferme de Monsieur le Gouverneur Général de faire respecter par les autorités sous ses ordres les engagements qu'il a contractés.

Veuillez agréer, etc., etc., etc.

(Signed) RIETH

A Son Excellence
le Marquis de Villalobar,
Ministre de Sa Majesté le Roi d'Espagne

NOTICE

Un nouvel ordre de service de Monsieur le Gouverneur Général se rapportant à l'Oeuvre de Ravitaillement vient d'être envoyé à toutes les autorités tant militaires que civiles du territoire placé

sous ses ordres. Cet ordre résume à nouveau les engagements pris par Monsieur le Gouverneur Général vis-à-vis de Messieurs les Ministres Protecteurs.

Dans cet ordre Monsieur le Gouverneur Général exige à nouveau catégoriquement que les conventions conclues soient respectées à la lettre et dit être décidé à frapper avec la plus grande rigueur ceux qui manqueraient aux commandments y relatifs. Il ordonne que toutes les communications de Messieurs les Ministres ou du C.H.N. agissant dans leur nom soient examinées soigneusement et sans perte de temps, que le résultat des enquêtes et—si la preuve d'une contravention a pu être apportée—la punition qui aurait été infligée soient immediatement portés à la connaissance de la V.C.N. Enfin Monsieur le Gouverneur Général ordonne que des mesures propices à empêcher le retour de pareils faits soient prises le cas échéant.

En plus, Monsieur le Gouverneur Général attend de la part des autorités sous ses ordres que toute action ou mesure pouvant être interprétées comme un manquement à sa parole, soient préalablement soumises à sa décision.

[77]

Declaration, 8 March 1918, by VON FALKENHAUSEN, *regarding the guarantees* (Document 352, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

J'ai déjà ordonné l'examen minutieux des points spéciaux en question. Les recherches ont été achevées pour une partie et j'ai chargé le chef de mon département politique d'informer Vos Excellences du résultat. En quelques points peu nombreux les recherches continuent encore. Mais je suis à même de déclarer en général dès à présent—et je suis bien aise d'en avoir l'occasion,—que j'aurai soin de veiller sévèrement à l'accomplissement strict des engagements qu'ont pris mes prédécesseurs vis-à-vis des Ministres des Etats Neutres.

BRUXELLES, le 8 mars 1918

[78] DOCUMENT NO. 652

Declaration, 27 April 1918, by VON FALKENHAUSEN, *exempting from requisition clothing in possession of private individuals in the Occupation Zone*

DÉCLARATION DU GOUVERNEUR GÉNÉRAL

Il résulte d'informations reçues que la C.R.B. se propose d'importer, d'ici peu, des quantités importantes de vêtements, étoffes, chaussures, etc., destinées aux populations civiles de la Belgique et du Nord de la France.

Ayant appris que l'inventaire des stocks de vêtements dans les maisons privées, tel qu'il a été ordonné par l'Inspection des Etapes à Mons pourrait mettre obstacle a l'importation des marchandises ci-dessus, je déclare par la présente que j'ai pas l'intention de réquisitionner les vêtements maintenant en possession de personnes privées dans le territoire du Gouvernement Général et qui est de leur usage personnel.

Si ces intentions devaient être modifiées, je donnerais à la Commission un préavis d'au moins trois mois avant d'effectuer les réquisitions projetées.

BRUXELLES, le 27 avril 1918

LE GOUVERNEUR GÉNÉRAL
(S.) VON FALKENHAUSEN
Général Commandant

[79] DOCUMENT NO. 653

Letter, 6 May 1918, GENERAL GOVERNMENT TO THE COMITÉ NATIONAL, *regarding the requisition of clothing*

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

J.No.V.5157

BRÜSSEL, den 6. Mai 1918

In der Anlage werden in Abschrift die von der Politischen Abteilung an die neutralen Gesandten, Protektoren des belgischen Ernährungskomitees, gerichteten Noten nebst Erklärungen, betreffend die Beschlagnahme von Kleidungsgegenständen, zur gefl. Kenntnisnahme ergebenst übersandt.

Als ein Teil der in dieser Angelegenheit geschlossenen Uebereinkunft ist vereinbart worden:

a) Das Comité National wird, sobald es hierzu imstande ist, die ihm zur Verfügung stehenden Kleidungsstücke proportional an die Bevölkerung des Generalgouvernements und der Etappen verteilen.

b) Diese Verteilung wird gemäss eines noch auszuarbeitenden Reglements erfolgen, die der bedürftigen Bevölkerung, sowie den beschäftigten Arbeitern erlaubt, gleichmässig aus der Verteilung Nutzen zu ziehen

Um Bestätigung des Einverständnisses mit Vorstehendem wird ergebenst gebeten.

(S.) RIETH

An das Comité National de Secours et d' Alimentation,
Brüssel

[80] DOCUMENT NO. 654

Letter, 17 July 1918, General Government to the C.R.B., *advising that clothing from private individuals would not be requisitioned as long as the relief organizations are in a position to supply imported clothing to the poorer classes*

General-Gouvernement in Belgien
Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle C.N.

Geschäftsnummer 26766

Brüssel, den 17. Juli 1918

An die Commission for Relief in Belgium,
Brüssel

In Erwiderung des Schreibens vom 12.d.Mts. No. 123, betreffend Einfuhr von Bekleidungsgegenständen, nehme ich ergebenst Bezug auf die Ausführungen der Deutschen Vermittlungsstelle C.N. vom 30. Mai d. J. No. 25500, in denen diesseitigen Erachtens die Frage des Herrn Poland bereits vorweg beantwortet wurde. Da hierüber jedoch immer noch keine Klarheit zu bestehen scheint, stehe ich nicht an, erneut das Folgende festzustellen:

Aus den Besprechungen mit den militärischen Stellen ging hervor, dass diese nicht beabsichtigen, Bekleidungsgegenstände bei Privaten zu requirieren, sofern das Comité National die minderbemittelte Bevölkerung in ausreichendem Masse mit solchen Gegenständen aus eingeführten Beständen versorgt. Wenn das Comité National aber nicht in der Lage ist, dies zu tun, so würden die Militärbehörden diese Versorgung selbst in die Hand nehmen müssen, und wäre dies wohl nicht ohne Requisitionsmassnahmen möglich. Sollen solche also vermieden werden, so wäre es erforderlich, dass die C.R.B. mit tunlichster Beschleunigung eine unzweideutige Erklärung der englischen Regierung erlangt und hierher mitteilt, dass die Einfuhr in vollem Umfange gestattet und eine ausreichende Versorgung sichergestellt wird.

(gez.) Rieth

[81] DOCUMENT NO. 655

Decree, 30 July 1918, by von Falkenhausen, *covering canal transport contracts*

Verordnung

betreffend Genehmigungspflicht von Wassertransportverträgen

ARTIKEL I

Verträge über Vermietung von Privatschiffen oder zur Übernahme von Gütertransporten auf dem Wasserwege (Miet- Fracht- & Schleppverträge) bedürfen der Genehmigung des Generalgouvernements Abteilung I b (Wassertransporte) oder eines der dem Generalgouvernement unterstehenden Hafenämten.

Jede Vertragspartei ist für die Vorlage der Verträge zur Genehmigung bei einer der bezeichneten Dienststellen verantwortlich.

ARTIKEL II

Dienststellen des Generalgouvernements oder einzelnen Transportunternehmungen kann eine allgemeine Genehmigung zum Abschluss derartiger Verträge erteilt werden und zwar ausschliesslich durch das Gouvernement.

ARTIKEL III

Eine Genehmigung zum Abschluss von Verträgen über den Transport von Stückgütern ist nicht erforderlich.

ARTIKEL IV

Wer der Vorschrift des Artikels I zuwiderhandelt, wird mit Gefängnis bis zu 6 Monaten oder Geldstrafe bis zu M. 50.000- bestraft; beide Strafarten können auch nebeneinander erkannt werden.

ARTIKEL V

Zuständig sind die Deutsche Militärgerichte und Militärbefehlshaber.

Brüssel, den 30. Juli 1918

Der Generalgouverneur in Belgien
Freiherr von Falkenhausen
Generaloberst

[82] DOCUMENT NO. 656

Letter, 1 August 1918, General Government to the C.R.B., *protecting belting used in the flour mills of the relief organization from requisition*

General-Gouvernement in Belgien,
Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle C.N.

Geschäftsnummer 27173

Brüssel, den 1. August 1918

Nach hier eingegangenen Mitteilungen der massgebenden Behörden besteht zur Zeit nicht die Absicht, die jetzt in Betrieb befindlichen Treibriemen der ausschliesslich für das Comité National arbeitenden Firmen in irgendwelcher Weise zu erfassen, sofern eine Liste dieser Betriebe und eine Aufstellung der darin befindlichen Treibriemen hier eingereicht und von hier bewilligt wird.

i.A. S. Roessingh

An die Commission for Relief in Belgium,
Hier

3. *Guarantees in the Army Zones of Belgium and the North of France. 1914–1918*

In the Army Zones the guarantees and declarations of the German authorities dealt in general with matters similar to those which arose in the zone of the General Government, but the methods by which these guarantees were obtained and issued were different. The military authorities were the complete masters in the Army Zones. They tolerated no civilian, and especially no foreign civilian, intervention in the affairs of these areas. There were no neutral diplomatic representatives to serve as channels for formal communications and representatives[8] of the Commission dealt directly with the officers responsible for civilian affairs. This relationship is responsible for two characteristics of the guarantees in the Army Zones. First, many were given orally by the responsible German officers and appear in writing only in the reports of the representatives of the Commission to the Director in Brussels. These oral guarantees proved to be wholly satisfactory, since the military authorities scrupulously kept their agreements. For the C.R.B. to have pressed for written contracts under these conditions would have produced nothing but a less accommodating attitude on the part of the army commands.

The second characteristic is that many of the guarantees appear to have been made on the initiative of the military, whereas in fact they originated in requests or suggestions of the Commission. This was sometimes a bit disconcerting to the C.R.B. representatives, but results were obtained and the suggestion was avoided that the army commands were subject to foreign pressure or advice in their regulation of civilian affairs.

When the Commission began its operations in Northern France, it had had five months' relief experience in Belgium. This experience enabled the C.R.B. to secure in the agreement of April 1915[9] a much more comprehensive guarantee than had been possible in Belgium where, naturally, it had been impossible to foresee all the matters on which guarantees would be needed. This April 1915 agreement covered a

[8] An account of the duties and activities of the C.R.B. district representatives in the North of France is given in Document 315, chapter vii.

[9] The German text of this agreement is given under serial [94] following. Document 283, chapter vi, is an English translation.

majority of the issues upon which guarantees were necessary, except the matter of the distribution of native crops, which was covered by a later understanding and revised in certain details each year to meet changed conditions.

[83] DOCUMENT NO. 657

Decree, 19 December 1914, by the GENERAL GOVERNMENT, *concerning the extension of relief operations to the Belgian Army Zone and protecting imported breadstuffs from requisition*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

BRÜSSEL, den 19. Dezember 1914

Beifolgend übersende ich ergebenst in Abschrift eine Anordnung der zuständigen Militärbehörde vom 6. d. M. und vom 16. d. M. zur gefälligen Kenntnisnahme. Es geht daraus hervor, dass das Brotgetreide des Comités im Operations- und Etappengebiet geschützt ist und dass die Arbeit des Comités die volle Unterstützung der dortigen Behörden findet.

(S.) VON SANDT

[6 December 1914]

Es ist ein Komitee gebildet worden, das für die belgische Bevölkerung englisches und amerikanisches Brotgetreide einführen wird.

Die Generalkommandos haben sich von den Gemeinden ihres im Operationsgebiet liegenden Bezirks den notwendigsten Bedarf an Brotgetreide—für einen nicht zu langen Zeitraum berechnet—anmelden zu lassen. Die Bedarfsanmeldungen sind der Etappen-Inspektion unmittelbar zuzusenden, die sie an das Komitee weitergeben wird.

Es ist unbedingt zu vermeiden, dass die Truppen von dem auf diese Weise den Gemeinden zugeführten Brotgetreide etwas entnehmen, da England sich zur Getreide-Einfuhr nur unter der Bedingung bereit erklärt hat, dass nichts davon zur Verpflegung deutscher Truppen verwendet wird.

[16 December 1914]

Der Verwaltungschef bei dem Generalgouverneur in Belgien ist unter dem. 8. 12. 14. Va 377 beim General-Gouvernement dahin vorstellig geworden, den durch den Krieg besonders stark in Anspruch genommenen Gemeinden der Provinzen Ost- und Westflandern beim Bezuge von Nahrungs- und Bedarfsartikeln nach Möglichkeit entgegenzukommen.

LEGATION OF SWITZERLAND

WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEPT. OF GERMAN INTERESTS

The undersigned Minister of Switzerland, in charge of German interests, hereby certifies on the strength of the arrangement concluded between the German Government and the Government of the United States of America that the

Steamer: FRIDLAND
Master: Victor Hansson
Port of Registry: GOTHENBURG, Sweden,
Official Number (Signal letters): J S C M

has on board exclusively goods of the American Commission for Relief in Belgium, intended for the suffering civil population in Belgium.

The present pass is issued upon the following conditions:

1. It is valid only for the present outward voyage and must be delivered immediately upon arrival in a Dutch port to the local German Consular Representative (Consul, Vice-Consul or Consul General) or to the Imperial German Minister at the Hague if there is no such Consul at the port of destination. The German Minister at the Hague will issue a similar certificate or pass for the return voyage.

2. The master has undertaken upon his word of honor to abstain during the outward and return voyage from any and all actions that may involve assistance to Germany's enemies.

3. Vessels of the Imperial Germany Navy have the right to search the ship; the cargo must be stored in such a manner as to permit of a rapid and easy search.

4. The Vessel must take the course North of the Shetland Islands, remain outside the blockade zone declared by the German Government and avoid the English Channel.

5. In case of non-compliance with the above conditions the ship loses all right of preferential treatment.

Washington, D. C., January 4th 1918

The Minister of Switzerland:

By:

Secretary of Legation.

This certificate was handed to the Captain of the Steamer on [illegible] January 1918

in charge of German Interests.

GERMAN SAFE CONDUCT PASS, 10 JANUARY 1918, FOR C.R.B. STEAMER "FRIDLAND"

Im Anschluss an den Tagesbefehl vom. 6. 12. 14. No. 169, wonach die General-Kommandos sich von den Gemeinden ihres im Operationsgebiet liegenden Bezirks den notwendigsten Bedarf an Brotgetreide—für einen nicht zu langen Zeitraum berechnet—anmelden zu lassen und die Bedarfsanmeldungen unmittelbar der Etappen-Inspektion zuzusenden haben, wird daher ersucht, hinsichtlich des übrigen Bedarfs der Gemeinden an Nahrungs- und Bedarfsartikeln in gleicher Weise die Etappen-Kommandanturen in ihrem Bezirk zu verfahren, jedoch nur insoweit, als diese von selbst vorstellig werden und die vorgenommene Prüfung die Notwendigkeit ergibt.

Die Etappen-Inspektion wird diese Anträge alsbald dem Verwaltungschef bei dem Generalgouverneur in Belgien zur Weitergabe an das Comité National de Secours in Brüssel übermitteln.

Dem Vertreter dieses Komitees in Gent ist anheimgegeben worden, sich zum Zwecke der Weiterbeförderung der vom Brüsseler Komitee dem Depot in Gent zugeführten Nahrungs- und Bedarfsartikeln an die Gemeinden mit der Etappen-Inspektion jeweilig in unmittelbares Einvernehmen zu setzen. Diese wird den Transport in ähnlicher Weise wie den Kohlentransport durch Vermittlung des Verwaltungsrates der belgischen Eisenbahnen regeln.

[84] DOCUMENT NO. 658

Letter, 5 January 1915, General Government to Whitlock, *extending protection for imported foodstuffs to the French territory about Maubeuge*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Brüssel, den 5. Januar 1915

Euerer Exzellenz

Beehre ich mich auf die Note vom 18. v. M. sehr ergebenst mitzuteilen, dass der Herr Generalgouverneur gemäss Verfügung vom 31. v. M. bestimmt hat, dass seine Verordnung vom 24. November v. J. betreffend den Schutz der vom Comité National eingeführten Lebensmittel u.s.w. auch auf die Lebensmittelversorgung der notleidenden Einwohner des Gebietes von Maubeuge Anwendung zu finden hat.

Mit dem Ausdruck vollkommener Hochachtung habe ich die Ehre zu verbleiben

Euerer Exzellenz sehr ergebener

(S.) von Sandt

An Seine Exzellenz den Minister
der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika,
Herrn Brand Whitlock,
Hier

[85] DOCUMENT NO. 659

Letter, 15 January 1915, General Government to Whitlock, *extending protection for imported foodstuffs to the French territory of Givet and Fumay*

Der Verwaltungschef bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Geschäftsnummer VII
656 II

Brüssel, den 15ten Januar 1915

Euerer Excellenz beehre ich mich sehr ergebenst mitzuteilen, dass der Herr Generalgouverneur den Schutz vor Requisitionen, den das Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation in Belgien geniesst, auch auf die Lebensmittelversorgung der französischen Gebietsteile von Givet und Fumay bis zur Maas ausgedehnt hat.

Mit dem Ausdruck vollkommenster Hochachtung verbleibe ich

Euerer Excellenz
sehr ergebener

Dr. v. Sandt

An Seine Excellenz den Minister der
Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika
Herrn Brand Whitlock

[86] DOCUMENT NO. 660

Letter, 8 February 1915, General Government to Comité National, *stating that the military authorities in Ghent have granted exemption to the relief organization for canal tolls in Flanders*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Geschäftsnummer VII. b/841

Brüssel, den 8. Februar 1915

Die zuständige Behörde in Gent hat, wie sie mir telegraphisch mitteilt, dem Comité National Gebührenfreiheit auf Kanälen in ihrem an das Occupationsgebiet angrenzenden Bezirk, das u.a. Ostflandern umfasst, eingeräumt und zwar in dem gleichen Umfange, wie sie das Comité im Occupationsgebiet geniesst.

Im Auftrage:

(gez.) Kaufmann

Am das Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation
Rue des Colonies, 66, III,
Hier

[87] DOCUMENT NO. 661

Letter, 9 February 1915, Military Commander at Namur to Whitlock, *confirming protection from requisition of relief supplies in the French territory about Givet, Fumay, and Sedan*

Kaiserliches Militaer-Gouvernement
der
Provinz Namur

Namur, den 9. Februar 1915

Euer Exzellenz beehre ich mich sehr ergebenst mitzuteilen, dass der Herr Gouverneur der Provinz Namur den Schutz vor Requisitionen, den das Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation in Belgien geniesst, auch auf die Lebensmittelversorgung der franzoesischen Gebietsteile von Givet und Fumay bis Maas- und Semoistal, sowie bis Sedan, ausgedehnt hat.

Mit dem Ausdruck vollkommenster Hochachtung verbleibe ich
Euerer Exzellenz sehr ergebener

(S.) von Longchamp
Generalmajor

An Seine Exzellenz den Minister der
Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika
Herrn Brand Whitlock,
Hier

[88] DOCUMENT NO. 662

Letter, 11 February 1915, General Government to Comité National, *confirming that the military authorities in Flanders have agreed to exempt imported breadstuffs and drugs from requisition*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Geschäftsnummer VII b 826

Brüssel, den 11. Februar [1915]

Die zuständige Militärbehörde teilt mir mit, dass sie für Ostflandern und den nördlichen Teil von Westflandern Anordnung dahin getroffen hat, dass die vom Comité eingeführten *Vorräte an Mehl und Brotgetreide sowie pharmazeutischen Gegenständen* in keinem Falle von den Truppen in Anspruch genommen werden dürfen. Dagegen bittet die Militärbehörde zur Vermeidung von Unzuträglichkeiten von einer Einführung von Nahrungs- und Futtermitteln aller Art, auch künstlichen, sowie von Vieh in das bezeichnete Gebiet abzusehen, zumal von diesen Nahrungsmitteln noch genügende Vorräte zur Ernährung der Bevölkerung vorhanden sind.

(S.) von Sandt

An das Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation
Hier

[89] DOCUMENT NO. 663

Letter, 17 February 1915, General Government to Comité National, *advising that the military authorities in Flanders have extended the guarantees against requisition to include imported fodder*

Der Verwaltungschef
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

Brüssel, den 17ten Februar [1915]

Im Verfolg meines Schreibens vom 11.ds VII b 826, teile ich ergebenst mit, dass die zuständige Militärbehörde für Ostflandern und den nördlichen Teil von Westflandern nunmehr auch die vom Comité National eingeführten Futtermittel aller Art, besonders Maiz und Oelkuchen, gegen Requisitionen schützt. Ich bitte die Section Agricole zu verständigen.

(gez.) von Sandt

An das Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation
Hier

[90] DOCUMENT NO. 664

Declaration, 8 March 1915, by Military Command at Revin, *that requisition of foodstuffs imported by the American Commission is forbidden*

8 March 1915

Declaration

At the desire of the Representative of the American Relief Commission it is herewith explicitly certified that any requisition for the needs of the German Army of the foodstuffs delivered to the Commune of Revin by the American Relief Commission is completely excluded.

(Signed) Puscher
Colonel and Commandant

[*Translation*]

[91]

Letter, 21 March 1915, von Jagow to Gerard, *stating that there would be no objection to neutral civilian delegates in the French districts* (Document 280, chapter vi, is an English translation of the following)

Auswärtiges Amt

Berlin, den 21. März 1915

Verehrteste Exzellenz,

Auf Ihre gefällige Anfrage vom 17. März darf ich Ihnen nach eingezogener Erkundigung ganz ergebenst erwidern, dass deutscherseits

nicht gefordert wird, die Verteilung von Nahrungsmitteln an die Bevölkerung der von den deutschen Truppen besetzten französischen Gebietsteile müsse unter der Aufsicht neutraler *Offiziere in Uniform* erfolgen. Nach den in Belgien gemachten Erfahrungen würden wir auch in den französischen Gebietsteilen neutrale Kommissare in Zivil zulassen. Sofern indessen amerikanischerseits Wert darauf gelegt werden sollte, im Falle der Übernahme der Versorgung der genannten Gebietsteile durch zwei oder drei amerikanische uniformierte Offiziere vertreten zu sein, so würde deutscherseits kein Einwand erhoben werden. Nur würde man Wert darauf legen, zuvor die Namen der Herren zu erfahren, deren Zulassung gewünscht wird.

Gern benutze ich diesen Anlass, um Euerer Exzellenz die Versicherung meiner ausgezeichnetsten Hochachtung zu erneuern.

(Signed) VON JAGOW

[92] DOCUMENT NO. 665

Letter, 27 March 1915, VON JAGOW TO GERARD, *inclosing communication from von Bissing giving his observations on the proposed relief in Northern France in connection with the work in Belgium* (Document 279, chapter vi, is an English translation of an extract of the inclosure)

Auswärtiges Amt

BERLIN, den 27. März 1915

VEREHRTE EXZELLENZ,

Gestatten Sie mir, dass ich Ihnen im Anschluss an meine vorläufige Mitteilung vom 15. d.M. anbei Abschrift eines Schreibens des Kaiserlichen General-Gouverneurs in Belgien zur geneigten Kenntnisnahme und mit der Bitte um Bescheidung des Herrn Hoover, übersende.

Mit der Versicherung meiner ausgezeichnetsten Hochachtung verbleibe ich

Euerer Exzellenz
ergebenster

(Signed) VON JAGOW

Abschrift II W.K.V. 1824
Der General-Gouverneur
in Belgien

J. Nr. Ia 1090

BRÜSSEL, den 21. März 1915

Zu der mir mitgeteilten Note des amerikanischen Botschafters Herrn Gerard vom 10. d. M. möchte ich meinerseits folgendes bemerken:

Was die Ernährung der französischen Bevölkerung südlich der belgischen Grenze angeht, so wird meinerseits die ausdrückliche und förmliche Erklärung abgegeben, dass die Nahrungsmittel, welche die "Kommission for Relief in Belgium" im Zusammenhange mit dem Comité National in Belgien aus dem neutralen Auslande durch das

Okkupationsgebiet nach Frankreich hereinbringt, von jeder militärischen Requisition freibleiben.

Sollten diese Waren durch das Gebiet der Etappe oder der Operationsarmee in Ost- und West-Flandern durchgeführt werden, so würden die dortigen zuständigen militärischen Instanzen, wie ich glauben möchte, auch ihrerseits die erforderlichen Versicherungen abzugeben bereit sein.

Da es meine ernsteste Sorge ist, die Ernährung der belgischen Bevölkerung auf eine gewisse Zeitdauer im Voraus zu sichern, ist es mir durch entsprechende Einwirkungen auf das Comité National gelungen, die Nahrungsmitteldepots des letzteren mit Vorräten gefüllt zu sehen, welche die Versorgung der Bevölkerung für die jedesmalige Dauer von etwa 3 Wochen ermöglichen. Ich muss Wert darauf legen, dass die Ernährung der nordfranzösischen Gebietsteile nicht aus diesen für Belgien bestimmten Reserven erfolgt, und bringe daher in Vorschlag, dass Vorkehrungen etwa durch Kennzeichnung der Säcke usw. dahin getroffen werden, dass die für Frankreich bestimmten, in die hiesigen Depots vorübergehend einzulagernden Vorräte streng von den für Belgien bestimmten abgesondert werden.

Hinsichtlich der Pässe ist es irrtümlich, wenn Herr Hoover behauptet, dass "diese nur unter grossen Einschränkungen offenbar nur durch Vermittlung des Herrn Heinemann (des amerikanischen Mitgliedes der Kommission) zu erhalten seien." Vielmehr werden die Pässe—ohne Mitwirkung des Herrn Heinemann—von der Passzentrale an die von dem amerikanischen Gesandten Herrn Whitlock bezeichneten und verbürgten Personen ausgestellt.

Was die Angaben des Herrn Hoover über die Verringerung der Zahl der in Belgien anwesenden amerikanischen Mitglieder der Kommission betrifft, so hat Herr Heinemann selbst die Berechtigung meiner Forderung, die Zahl der im Dienste des Comités und der Kommission tätigen Herren möglichst einzuschränken, anerkannt und deren Erfüllung, als in seinem eigenen Wunsche liegend, bestimmt in Aussicht gestellt.

Infolgedessen habe ich in einem an Herrn Heinemann gerichteten Schreiben vom 20. v. M. in voller Uebereinstimmung mit den Wünschen des genannten Mitgliedes festgestellt, dass die Zahl der amerikanischen Mitglieder bis zum 15. April auf ca. 25 eingeschränkt werden sollte.

Wenn entgegen den damaligen Anschauungen nunmehr die Kommission eine Erhöhung dieser Zahl für notwendig hält, so will ich entgegenkommenderweise keine Einwendungen dagegen erheben, dass etwa 10 Personen mehr nach dem 15. April für die Kommission in Belgien tätig werden. Dagegen muss ich aber entschiedene Verwahrung einlegen, als ob ich die Zahl der amerikanischen Mitglieder etwa deshalb reduziert hätte, um die Kontrolle zu erschweren. Die von meinem Vorgänger und mir gemachten Zusicherungen hinsichtlich der Requisitionsfreiheit sind und werden auf das peinlichste und allerbestimmteste meinerseits eingehalten und bedarf es in dieser Hinsicht einer Ueberwachung durch amerikanische Mitglieder durchaus nicht.

Das Verlangen des Herrn Hoover, die Zahl der in Belgien tätigen amerikanischen Mitglieder lediglich aus eigenem Ermessen der Kom-

mission bestimmen zu lassen, kann nicht anerkannt werden; vielmehr wird sich diese Zahl nach dem auch von mir zu prüfenden Bedürfnis richten müssen.

(Signed) Freiherr von Bissing

An das
Auswärtige Amt

[93]

Memorandum, 21 March 1915, of conference between Major General Zoellner and Connett, *regarding the extension of relief to Northern France* (Document 281, chapter vi, is an English translation of the following)

Besprechung

im Grossen Hauptquartier am 21. März 1915 Vormittags. Anwesend: Generalmajor Zoellner, Vertreter der Obersten Heeresleitung und Mr. A. N. Connett, Vertreter der C.R.B. (Committee Relief Belgium)

1. Das Telegramm von Mr. Hoover, London, 18. März 1915, mit Bezug auf die Überwachung der Verteilung von Nahrungsmitteln an die Zivilbevölkerung des von der Deutschen Armee okkupierten Gebietes Nordfrankreichs wurde vorgelegt und sein Inhalt besprochen.

2. Die Deutsche Heeresleitung ist im Prinzip damit einverstanden, dass amerikanische Offiziere in Uniform in der vorgeschlagenen Weise als Überwacher für die Tätigkeit des C.R.B. handeln.

3. Die Deutsche Heeresleitung gibt die Zusicherung, dass die Waren nie für die Bedürfnisse der Armee in Anspruch genommen werden, sondern allein für die Zivilbevölkerung der okkupierten Teile Frankreichs verwendet werden.

4. Die Deutsche Heeresleitung hat die in Nordfrankreich befindlichen Nahrungsmittel für Mensch und Tier gegen Quittung mit Beschlag belegt, sodass alle Bestände in den Besitz der Deutschen Heeresverwaltung übergegangen sind. Somit sind Vorräte, die der französichen Bevölkerung gehören, überhaupt nicht mehr vorhanden, abgesehen von Geflügel und Gemüse im Garten. Es muss also zur Ausschliessung von Missverständnissen festgestellt werden, dass die Inanspruchnahme der jetzt bereits beschlagnahmten Bestände für Heereszwecke nicht als neue Beitreibung angesehen werden darf. Die unentbehrlichsten Nahrungsmittel für Mensch und Vieh sind der Bevölkerung bisher in bestimmt vorgeschriebenen Sätzen deutscherseits verabfolgt worden.

5. Bezüglich der Verwendung der neuen Ernte hat die deutsche Heeresleitung freie Hand, weil sie durch Lieferung von Saatgetreide, Gestellung von Arbeitskräften, Gespannen, Motorpflügen usw. das Wesentlichste zur Gewinnung der Ernte selbst bewerkstelligt und für die Benutzung des Landes und französischer Arbeitskräfte Vergütung leistet.

6. Die Deutsche Heeresverwaltung sichert den C.R.B. in Bezug auf Frachtkosten grösstes Entgegenkommen zu, und wird mindestens die gleichen Vergünstigungen gewähren, wie für die Versorgung Belgiens.

[94]

Agreements, 13 April 1915, between the Supreme Command of the German Army and the C.R.B., *regarding the provisioning of the population in the occupied French territory* (Document 283, chapter vi, is an English translation of the following)

Haupt-Übereinkommen

Zwischen der deutschen Obersten Heeresleitung (im Auftrage des General-Quartiermeisters, vertreten durch Major v. Kessler, Generalstabsoffizier beim Generalintendanten des Feldheeres[)]und der Commission for Relief in Belgium, vertreten durch Herrn O. T. Crosby, Vertreter der C.R.B. in Brüssel (der allein zeichnet) und durch Herrn A. N. Connett

1. Die deutsche Oberste Heeresleitung stimmt zu, dass die C.R.B. die Versorgung der Bevölkerung des besetzten französischen Gebietes mit Lebensmitteln übernimmt.

2. Die deutsche Oberste Heeresleitung versichert, dass die zu diesem Behufe eingeführten Waren niemals für Zwecke des deutschen Heeres in Anspruch genommen, sondern allein für die französische Zivilbevölkerung des besetzten Gebietes verwendet werden. Sie wird an alle nachgeordneten Stellen strengen Befehl erlassen, dass diese Waren niemals beschlagnahmt werden dürfen. Etwa noch nicht verteilte Waren bleiben zur ausschlieslichen Verfügung der C.R.B.

3. Der C.R.B. wird gestattet, in den besetzten Gebieten Nordfrankreichs amerikanische Staatsbürger als Beauftragte einzusetzen, die sich nach dem besondern Nebenübereinkommen No. 1 von der Durchführung der unter 2 gegebenen Zusicherung überzeugen können.

4. Die Anforderung und Verteilung der Waren erfolgt gemäss den Anordnungen der C.R.B. unter Mitwirkung der deutschen Militärbehörden durch französische Vertrauensmänner. Diese werden von den französischen Gemeinden bezeichnet und unterliegen der Zustimmung der deutschen Militärbehörden und der C.R.B.

Sie vertreten die französischen Gemeinden in deren Verkehr mit den Beauftragten der C.R.B. besonders auch hinsichtlich Abrechnung und Bezahlung.

5. Für den Transport der Waren bis an den Bestimmungsort sichert die deutsche Oberste Heeresleitung jede Unterstützung zu. Die Waren sollen zollfrei eingeführt und die Frachten nach gleichen Grundsätzen berechnet werden, die jeweils für die Versorgung Belgiens massgebend sind. Für den Transport gilt das besondere Nebenübereinkommen No. 2.

6. Zur Ausschliessung von Zweifeln über Herkunft und Bestimmung der gelieferten Waren werden alle für sie benutzten Transportmittel und Lagerräume militärischerseits mit dienstlicher Aufschrift versehen. Diese macht kenntlich, dass der Inhalt unter den Schutz der Bestimmungen der Ziffer 2 fällt.

7. Wenn militärische Rücksichten es erfordern, kann dieser Vertrag seitens der deutschen Obersten Heeresleitung jederzeit ohne Angabe von Gründen durch entsprechende Mitteilung an die C.R.B. aufgehoben werden. Jedoch sollen alle dann bereits von der C.R.B.

eingeführten und im besetzten französischen Gebiet befindlichen Waren entsprechend den Bestimmungen dieses Vertrages verwendet werden. Den Beauftragten der C.R.B. wird gestattet, in diesem Falle zur Abwickelung ihrer Geschäfte solange im besetzten Gebiet zu bleiben, als dies militärischerseits für durchführbar erachtet wird.

8. Das Recht der deutschen Militärbehörden, die im Lande noch vorhandenen Nahrungsmittel für Mensch und Tier gegen Gutschein zum militärischen Verbrauch zu beschlagnahmen, wird durch diesen Vertrag nicht berührt. Ebenso behalten sich die deutschen Militärbehörden bezüglich der neuen Ernte alle Rechte vor.

Brüssel, den 13. April 1915

(gez.) von Kessler, *Major*
(S.) Oscar T. Crosby

Nebenübereinkommen No. 1

über die Stellung der Beauftragten der C.R.B. im besetzten französischen Gebiet

1. Den Beauftragten der C.R.B. wird die Berechtigung zuerkannt, sich von der zugesicherten Verwendung der von der C.R.B. gelieferten Waren zu überzeugen.

2. Die deutschen Militärbehörden werden ihnen bei Erfüllung dieser Aufgabe jede mögliche Unterstützung zuteil werden lassen. Demgegenüber muss aus militärischen Gründen gefordert werden, dass die Beauftragten sich lediglich mit den Fragen beschäftigen, die durch ihre Tätigkeit bedingt sind.

3. Die Beauftragten sind sich bewusst, dass ihre Tätigkeit im Gebiet des Feldheeres bestimmten Einschränkungen unterworfen werden muss. Diese werden von der Militärbehörde lediglich mit Rücksicht auf die jeweilige militärische Lage bindend festgesetzt werden.

4. Im besetzten Gebiet werden errichtet:
eine Hauptstelle;
fünf Verpflegungs-Bezirke.

5. An jeder Stelle werden 2 Herren amerikanischer Staatsangehörigkeit nach Wahl der C.R.B. zugelassen.

Auf Verlangen erhalten sie unentgeltlich Quartier, die dem Offizier zustehende Feldverpflegung und die erforderliche Bedienung. Für die durch ihre Tätigkeit bedingten Fahrten wird ihnen ein Heereskraftwagen zur Verfügung gestellt. Jedem Herrn wird ein seine persönliche Sicherheit verbürgender Ausweis ausgehändigt.

6. An der Hauptstelle wird anstatt des zweiten amerikanischen Mitgliedes der C.R.B. ein Beauftragter des Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation, das von der C.R.B. mit der Buchführung betraut ist, zugelassen. Die Wahl dieser Persönlichkeit unterliegt der Genehmigung der Obersten Heeresleitung.

7. Jeder Stelle wird ein englisch und französisch sprechender Offizier zugeteilt, der ausschliesslich für diesen Dienst kommandiert ist. Er hat sie zu ihrer persönlichen Sicherheit auf ihren Fahrten zu begleiten und wird ihnen überhaupt in jeder möglichen Weise behülflich sein.

8. Die nach Ziffer 4 errichteten Verpflegungsbezirke werden in Unterbezirke zerlegt. Für jeden Unterbezirk werden ein Hauptort und an diesem Vertrauensleute französischer Staatsangehörigkeit nach Ziffer 4 des Hauptübereinkommens bestimmt.

9. Den Beauftragten wird die Berechtigung zugestanden, diese Vertrauensleute zu Zwecken der Überwachung und der Abrechnung in den Vororten aufzusuchen und dort die Gemeindevertreter der Unterbezirke persönlich zu empfangen. Diese Berechtigung kann, wenn die militärische Lage es erfordert, vorübergehend von der zuständigen Militärbehörde eingeschränkt werden. Doch soll es in diesem Falle den Beauftragten unbenommen sein, sich die Gemeindevertreter durch Vermittelung der Militärbehörde zur Rücksprache an seinen Wohnsitz zu bescheiden.

10. Jede, auch die persönliche Korrespondenz der Beauftragten ist offen dem zugeteilten Offizier zu übermitteln, der sie auf schnellstem Wege und im Gebiet der Reichspost unentgeltlich weiter befördert. Die Benutzung des Militärtelegraphen und Fernsprechers durch Vermittelung des Offiziers ist gestattet und gebührenfrei.

11. Jeder Beauftragte hat bei Übernahme seiner Stellung durch Namensunterschrift zu bescheinigen, dass ihm die vorstehenden Bestimmungen bekannt gegeben sind. Er übernimmt damit zugleich die Verpflichtung, seinen Dienst so zu versehen, wie von einem ehrenwerten Bürger eines neutralen Staates erwartet werden muss.

Brüssel, den 13. April 1915

(Unterschrift) von Kessler, *Major*
(S.) Oscar T. Crosby

Nebenübereinkommen No. 2

über den Transport der von der C.R.B. gelieferten Güter

1. Der Transport soll nach Möglichkeit auf dem Wasserweg erfolgen. Die Benutzung der Wasserstrassen ist gebührenfrei. Die Regelung der Frachten mit den Schiffern bleibt der C.R.B. überlassen. Die Ausstellung von Pässen für die Schiffer wird durch besondere Vorschriften geregelt.

2. Für den Eisenbahn-Transport von Nahrungsmitteln für Mensch und Tier werden vom deutschen Eisenbahn-Verwaltungsrat in Brüssel nicht mehr als 50 p.c. der regelrechten Fracht erhoben. Die gleiche Frachtermässigung geniessen leer zurücklaufende Säcke. Für nicht rechtzeitig be- oder entladene Eisenbahnwagen ist das volle Standgeld nach den Tarifvorschriften zu zahlen.

3. Die den Eisenbahn-Sendungen beizugebenden Frachtbriefe müssen nach Festsetzung des deutschen Eisenbahn-Verwaltungsrates eine ordnungsmässige Bescheinigung tragen, dass die zu transportierenden Güter für Versorgung der französischen Zivilbevölkerung dienen.

4. Die zum Transport benutzten Eisenbahnwagen sind mit Zetteln zu versehen, die den Inhalt als Eigentum der C.R.B. kenntlich machen.

5. Alle zur äusserlichen Kenntlichmachung der Güter dienenden Zeichen, wie Zettel u.s.w. sind durch die C.R.B. nach Übereinkommen mit dem deutschen Eisenbahn-Verwaltungsrat herzustellen.

6. Die beladenen Eisenbahnwagen werden plombiert ihrem Bestimmungsort zugeführt. Eine Begleitung von Wagen oder Zügen durch Abgeordnete der C.R.B. ist unzulässig.

7. Die erforderlichen Eisenbahnwagen sind mindestens 2–3 Tage vor Bereitstellung bei der Versandstation anzufordern. Eine Verpflichtung zur Gestellung von Wagen kann die deutsche Eisenbahnverwaltung nicht übernehmen, jedoch soll den Anforderungen der C.R.B. nach Möglichkeit Rechnung getragen werden.

BRÜSSEL, den 13. April 1915

(Unterschrift) VON KESSLER, *Major*
(S.) OSCAR T. CROSBY

DOCUMENT NO. 666

Label, 26 April 1915, issued by General Headquarters, *protecting shipments of relief supplies in the North of France*

COMITÉ D'ALIMENTATION DU NORD DE LA FRANCE (C.F.)

Sous le Patronage de la Commission for Relief in Belgium (C.R.B.)
et du Comité National de Secours d'Alimentation (C.N.)

SERVICE DE TRANSPORT ET D'EMMAGASINAGE DE VIVRES, DENRÉES ET MARCHANDISES DIVERSES

Stempel der Deutschen Obersten Heeresleitung
Cachet du Commandant Supérieur de l'Armée allemande

Auf Befehl der Deutschen Obersten Heeresleitung, dürfen sämtliche von der *Commission for Relief in Belgium* eingeführten Waren, die für die Lebensmittelversorgung der Zivilbevölkerung des besetzten französischen Gebietes bestimmt sind, von den deutschen Militär- oder Zivilbehörden weder requiriert noch beschlagnahmt werden.

Ebenso dürfen die den Transport ausübenden Führer, Zugtiere und Wagen aller Art nicht für Heereszwecke in Anspruch genommen werden.

Grosses Hauptquartier, den 26. April 1915

Par ordre du Commandant supérieur de l'Armée allemande, toutes les marchandises importées par la *Commission for Relief in Belgium* et destinées au ravitaillement de la population civile du territoire français occupé, ne pourront être ni réquisitionnées ni saisies par les autorités militaires ou civiles allemandes.

Les conducteurs, attelages et véhicules de tout genre affectés au transport de ces marchandises ne pourront être ni réquisitionnés ni saisis pour les besoins de l'armée allemande.

Grand Quartier Général, le 26 Avril 1915

[96] DOCUMENT NO. 667

Agreement, 6 July 1915, between the Army Command and the C.R.B., *covering the relief work in the Army Zone in Belgium*

[Ghent, 6 July 1915]

1. The Etappen-Inspektion gives the assurance that the goods imported for the said purpose will never be called upon for the use of the German Army, but shall be used solely for the Belgian civil population of the occupied territory. The Etappen-Inspektion will issue strict orders to all the respective subordinate authorities to the effect that these goods must never be seized. Any goods which may not have been distributed at any time will remain at the exclusive disposal of the C.R.B.

2. The Etappen-Inspektion will afford every facility for the carriage of the goods to the place of destination. The goods will be admitted free of duty and freight will be charged according to similar principles as may, from time to time, be in force for the supply of Belgium.

3. In order to eliminate doubts as to origin and destination of the goods supplied, all means of transport and storing-rooms will be labelled officially by the German military authorities in such a manner as to make the goods recognizable as those covered by the stipulation of paragraph 1.

4. If military exigencies should so require, this agreement may be cancelled by the Etappen-Inspektion at any time without giving any reasons, by a notice to that effect to the C.R.B. However, all goods imported by the C.R.B. then being already within the occupied Belgian territory shall be disposed of in accordance with the stipulation of this agreement. In this case the American delegates will be permitted to remain long enough to discharge their duties in so far as this is considered practicable for military reasons.

5. The right of the German military authorities to requisition for military purposes against *bons* the foodstuffs for men and animals still existing in the country is in no way affected by this agreement. Likewise, the German military authorities reserve to themselves all rights in respect to the new crop.

6. The delegates of the C.R.B. are authorized to satisfy themselves that the goods supplied by the C.R.B. are being used in accordance with the guarantees given.

7. The German military authorities will afford them every possible assistance in the carrying out of this duty. On the other hand, for military reasons, they will be expected to limit themselves to such matters as are within the scope of their duties.

8. The delegates are aware that their activities in the zone of the field-army will have to be subjected to certain restrictions. These will be fixed as binding by the military authorities in respect of the military situation at the time being.

9. There will be established in the territory occupied by the Fourth Army

A central office (Ghent)

Three sub-districts with stores (Beernem, Thielt, Courtrai)

10. At the central office two gentlemen of American nationality will be admitted, as selected by the C.R.B. A military motor car will be placed at the disposal of these gentlemen for the journeys necessitated by their duties in the zone of the Fourth Army; for the journeys to Brussels a car of their own with the corresponding passes can be used. Every gentleman will be granted a passport guaranteeing his personal safety and a car-permit.

11. To the central office, an officer speaking English and French will be detailed exclusively for this duty. He has to accompany the delegates on their journeys for their personal safety and will generally assist them in every possible way.

12. All correspondence of the C.R.B. relative to ravitaillement has to be handed open to the attached officer who will forward it on by the quickest means, and in the zone of the Imperial Post, free of postage. The use of the military telegraphs and telephones will be allowed through the medium of the said officer. No fees will be charged.

13. On entering upon his position, every delegate will certify by his signature that he has been made acquainted with the above stipulations. At the same time he takes upon himself the obligation to carry out his duties in such a manner as may be expected from an honorable citizen of a neutral state.

14. As far as possible, the transportation shall take place by water. No tolls have to be paid for the use of the waterways. The payment of the freight to the lightermen is a matter of the C.R.B. Special regulations will be fixed for the granting of passes for the lightermen by the Etappen-Bau-Inspektion and the Hafenkommandanturen.

15. For the shipment by rail of foodstuffs for man and beast, the German Railway Administration in Brussels will demand no more than 50 per cent of normal freight rates. The same reduction of rates will apply to the return of empty bags. For cars which are delayed during the loading or unloading, the full demurrage, as specified by the tariffs, must be paid.

16. The waybills accompanying the rail-shipments must contain a regular attestation made in accordance with the decision of the German Railway Administration and stating that the goods are destined for the Belgian civil population.

17. The railway cars used for the transportation must be provided with labels which show that the contents are the property of the C.R.B.

18. All means of distinguishing the goods, as labels, etc., have to be supplied by the C.R.B. in agreement with the German Railway Administration at Brussels.

19. The loaded cars will be delivered sealed at destination. Delegates of the C.R.B. will not be allowed to accompany cars or trains in transit.

20. Applications for the necessary cars must reach the station master at least two or three days beforehand. The German Railway Administration do not guarantee the supply of the cars. However, they will as far as possible attend to the needs of the C.R.B.

[97] DOCUMENT NO. 668

Letter, 18 August 1915, Army Command in Belgium to the C.R.B., *confirming the continued co-operation of the German Army in the task of relief*

Etappen-Inspektion of the 4th Army
Ing. No. 3091

Ghent, 18 August 1915

Oscar T. Crosby Esq.
Commission for Relief in Belgium
Brussels

Dear Sir:

In answer to your letter of July 10th, addressed to Major Adler, the Etappen-Inspektion informs you that it fully recognises the difficult and delicate task undertaken by the C.R.B. The Etappen-Inspektion welcomes the C.R.B. as it would welcome any other undertaking created or to be created for the sake of humanity and which seems appropriate to relieve the hardships arising from this war, from which the Belgian population in particular is suffering. For this reason, the Etappen-Inspektion will give the C.R.B. every possible assistance, as far as military exigencies permit. The Etappen-Inspektion therefore attaches great value to the continuance, in general as heretofore, of the ravitaillement of Belgium.

The Inspektion has noted with interest the report on the evolution of the C.R.B. as far as same was not already known to it.

The authorities of the Etappen-Inspektion have been informed as to the working of the *raison d'être* and the aim of the C.R.B. The authorities specially interested have received copies of your letter.

The Inspektion considers that it should take up some points of your letter:

The necessary protection for the merchandise and ships of the C.R.B. is given by the respective orders and notices to the relative military authorities in all the Operation and Etappen Zones. In case of erroneous actions, the authorities in power will stop it.

The German military authorities have, as a matter of course, made use of the rights of war to requisition in the country itself for the provisioning and general means of the army. They will do so also in the future within the limits which assure, if only in a moderate way, the feeding of the populations of the occupied territory. Moreover it may be said that payment is made by *bons* given for provisions, cattle-food, cattle and horses.

As to a possible annulment of the conventions with the C.R.B. and the further treatment, in such cases, of their provisions, i.e. goods, it has only been agreed that in such cases the goods imported and existing in Belgian occupied territory should be further used for their purpose, viz: in favor of the Belgian population. Should, however, the C.R.B. consider it more convenient to withdraw and reship such goods, the Etappen-Inspektion will not oppose such action.

As to the question of guarantee for Belgian boats and boatmen leaving Belgium, such guarantee has not been asked for from the

C.R.B. direct, just as such boats and men are not engaged direct by the C.R.B. On the contrary, it was intended that the contractors employed by the C.R.B. should be made by the latter to deposit the sums mentioned. You will understand that for military reasons the German authorities cannot allow that people of military age should leave the country or that we should possibly be deprived of valuable boats. As you yourself say quite rightly, the C.R.B. has no power over these people, and it is for this reason that the deposit of the said amounts was proposed.

Moreover, the C.R.B. is free to make use of Dutch boats and crews for its transports, no security whatsoever having to be deposited for these and the German authorities imposing no restrictions on same as long as the published orders are observed.

The German military authorities thank you for information that you intend to give in case of difficulties occurring in the future and in view of the hitherto harmonious co-operation with all stations of the C.R.B. it hardly calls for our special assurances that, in so far as military hindrances do not prevent, everything will be done to remove at once any justified grounds for complaint.

With the expression of high esteem on behalf of the Etappen-Inspektion,

THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF
(Signed) OSTERTAG
Oberstleutnant

[*Translation*]

[98]

Agreement, 23 August 1915, between GENERAL HEADQUARTERS AND THE C.R.B., *regarding bread cereals, whereby the Germans agree to issue 100 grams of flour per capita per day from the native crops and the Commission 150 grams of imported flour* (Document 362, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

Generalintendant des Feldheeres
Nr. 1634/8. 15

Versorgung der französischen
Bevölkerung mit Brotfrucht

Vorgang: Sitzung vom 16.7.15.
Punkt 4

GR. H. QU., den 23.8.1915

1. Spätestens mit dem 11. September beginnend ist der Bevölkerung des besetzten französischen Gebietes aus der hier gewonnenen Ernte zur Verfügung zu stellen:
für den Kopf und den Tag nach Wunsch der Gemeinden bis zu 100 g Mehl.

2. Das spanisch-amerikanische Hülfskomitee hat sich unter dieser Voraussetzung bereit erklärt, bis auf weiteres als Ergänzung hierzu zu liefern:
für den Kopf und Tag mindestens 150 g Mehl.

3. Somit erhält die Bevölkerung für Kopf und Tag 250 g Mehl, d.s. rund 345 g Brot. Mit Rücksicht auf den Mangel an anderweiten Nahrungsmitteln ist dieser Satz als nicht zu hoch bemessen zu erachten.

4. Die Abgabe erfolgt entweder in Korn, wo die Möglichkeit der Vermahlung durch die Bevölkerung gegeben ist, oder, wo dies nicht der Fall ist, in Mehl.

5. Mit Rücksicht auf Schonung der Roggenbestände ist bis auf weiteres nur Weizen oder Weizenmehl zu verausgaben.

6. Die Verausgabung hat auf Grund der Statistiken zu erfolgen, die von den Begleitoffizieren der Beauftragten der C.R.B. geführt werden. Die hiernach erforderlichen Mengen sind durch Vermittelung dieser Offiziere möglichst für je einen Monat im voraus den Gemeinden zuzuleiten.

Einmal verausgabte Bestände unterliegen dem gleichen Schutz wie die von der C.R.B. eingeführten Lebensmittel. Ihre Verwaltung ist Sache der Gemeinden. Die portionsmässige Verteilung auf die Gemeindemitglieder wird durch die Begleitoffiziere überwacht.

Engstes Zusammenarbeiten der Etappen-Intendanten mit den Begleitoffizieren ist geboten.

7. Für die Bezahlung ist der Requisitionspreis zu Grunde zu legen. Danach sind von den empfangenen Gemeinden für je 100 kg Mehl frei Abnahme-Bahnhof 30.0 frcs. oder 24.0 M zu entrichten.

8. Die Bezahlung hat in kursfähigem Gelde zu erfolgen. Stadtscheine usw. sind nur im Notfalle und insoweit anzunehmen, als sie der hierüber besonders ergehenden Verfügung entsprechen. Wo es möglich ist, den Kaufpreis gegen Leistungen der Gemeinden aufzurechnen, ist diese Verrechnung vorzuziehen.

Sollte eine Gemeinde keinerlei Zahlungsmöglichkeit mehr besitzen, so ist über weitere Abgabe von Mehl die Entscheidung des Generalintendanten einzuholen.

9. In den Gebietsteilen, in denen aus militärischen Gründen seitens der C.R.B. nicht geliefert werden kann, ist die gesamte Portion nach Wunsch der Gemeinden bis zu 250 g Mehl aus den im Lande gewonnenen Beständen zu verausgaben.

Bezahlung nach Ziffer 7 und 8.

(gez.) VON SCHOELER

Verteilungsplan:

Armeeoberkommandos 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, v. Strantz, Falkenhausen		je 3	Abdr.
Etappen-Inspektion	desgl.	je 3	"
Begleitoffiziere C.R.B.	Gr. H.Q., Etappe 2, 3, 5, 6, 7....	je 2	"
Generalquartiermeister		je 1	"
Armeeoberkommando 4 Etappen-Inspektion 4 Gouvernement Lille Gouvernement Metz Kriegsminsterium (B 1, B 2) Reichsamt des Innern Armeeintendant beim General-Gouvernement Belgien		nachrichtl. je 2	"

[99]

Decree, 3 September 1915, by General Headquarters, *respecting the distribution of the potato crop in Northern France* (Document 363, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

Generalintendant des Feldheeres
Nr. 126/9. 15

Verwendung der Kartoffelernte

Vorgang: Gen. Qu. Mstr. 1.a.
Nr. 5933 v. 12.3.15

Gr.H.Q., den 3.9. 1915

Aus den im besetzten französischen Gebiet geernteten Kartoffelbeständen ist zunächst der Bedarf für die Bevölkerung zu decken. Die danach verbleibenden Mengen sind für die Truppenverpflegung zu verwenden. Saatgut wird später aus belgischen oder heimischen Beständen überwiesen werden.

A. Bedarf für die Bevölkerung.

1. Der Bedarf ist mit 200 g für Kopf und Tag anzusetzen. Zu Grunde zu legen sind die Einwohnerzahlen für die Versorgung mit Brotfrucht. (Gen. Int. 1634/8. 15)

2. Der Bedarf ist zunächst von der Ernte ab auf 6 Monate sicherzustellen.

3. Die Ueberweisung der hiernach zuständigen Mengen erfolgt durch Vermittelung der Verpflegungs-Offiziere für die Zivilbevölkerung (Begleitoffiziere der Beauftragten der C.R.B.) an die Gemeinden, möglichst für je einen Monat im voraus.

Einmal verausgabte Bestände unterliegen dem gleichen Schutz wie die von der C.R.B. eingeführten Lebensmittel.

4. Auf die zu überweisenden Beträge sind die Mengen anzurechnen, die von den Gemeindemitgliedern etwa aus Gartenland und dergl. gewonnen werden und nicht beschlagnahmt sind.

5. Die Verrechnung des Wertes der überwiesenen Mengen erfolgt nach folgenden Grundsätzen:

(*a*) Wird ein Gutschein über die Ablieferung der Kartoffelernte gegeben, so sind die der Bevölkerung überwiesenen Mengen auf ihm abzusetzen. Erfolgt die Lieferung aus anderen Gemeindebezirken, so ist auf deren Gutscheinen ersichtlich zu machen, welche Mengen und an welche Gemeinden diese abgegeben worden sind.

(*b*) Werden Kartoffeln an die Bevölkerung abgegeben, die auf Grund eines Pachtverhältnisses gewonnen sind, so hat Bezahlung zu erfolgen.

Wo sich die Möglichkeit bietet, ist der Wert der gelieferten Kartoffeln gegen Arbeitsleistungen der empfangenden Gemeinden aufzurechnen.

Als Preis ist der Requisitionspreis von 10 Frs. für je 100 kg. zu Grunde zu legen. Soweit Kartoffeln, die als Speisekartoffeln nicht verwendbar sind, auch an die Bevölkerung als Futterkartoffeln abgegeben werden, was der Regelung innerhalb der Armeen überlassen

wird, regeln die Armeen die Preisbemessung unter Zugrundelegung des vorerwähnten Requisitionspreises für Speisekartoffeln.

6. Verladung, Entladung und etwa erforderlicher Landtransport ist den beteiligten Gemeinden zu übertragen, soweit dies möglich ist.

B. Bedarf für die Truppenverpflegung.

1. Die übrig bleibenden Mengen stehen völlig für die Truppenverpflegung zur Verfügung.

2. Es ist überschläglich zu berechnen, auf welche Zeit die Armee mit diesen Beständen versorgt werden kann.

3. Reicht nach dieser Berechnung die verfügbare Menge nicht von der Ernte über die Wintermonate bis etwa Mitte März kommenden Jahres so sind die Landesbestände in erster Linie für die Wintermonate zurückzuhalten, während deren der Eisenbahntransport von Kartoffeln wegen Frostgefahr unmöglich ist.

Fehlmengen sind zunächst aus belgischen Beständen zu decken. Anforderungen bei der Etappen-Intendantur der 4. Armee, weiterhin bei der Armee-Intendantur des General-Gouvernements in Brüssel. Heimische Bestände sind erst in Anspruch zu nehmen, wenn aus Belgien nicht geliefert werden kann.

C. Lieferung von Saatgut für die Frühjahrsbestellung.

Ueber die Lieferung von Saatgut erfolgt weitere Bestimmung.

(gez.) VON SCHOELER

Verteilungsplan:

Armeeoberkommandos 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, v. Strantz, Falkenhausen		je 3	Abdr.
Etappen-Inspektionen	desgl.	je 3	"
Begleitoffiziere C.R.B.	Gr. H.Q., Etappe 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	je 2	"
Generalquartiermeister		je 1	"
Armeeoberkommando 4 Etappen-Inspektion 4 Gouvernement Lille Gouvernement Metz Kriegsministerium (B 1, B 2) Reichsamt des Innern Armeeintendant beim General-Gouvernement Belgien		nachrichtl. je 2	"

[100] DOCUMENT NO. 669

Order, 3 September 1915, by GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *covering the rationing of native flour in amount 100 grams per capita per diem, the C.R.B. to import and distribute 150 grams per capita per diem*

[CHARLEVILLE, 3 September 1915]

The Administration of the German Army has made special arrangements for the purpose of making possible the delivery of a ration of flour greater than 190 grams to the French population beginning September 11. The C.R.B. will furnish at least 150 grams of

this; the Administration up to 100 grams. This latter quantity will be delivered in the form of wheat flour and is to be distributed to the population or used in its interest in equal rations like the flour of the C.R.B. The flour delivered by the Military Administration is to be paid by the Communes in ready money (au comptant); the price is fixed at 30 francs per 100 kg. delivered at the station of the district. For the transportation to the Regions and to the Communes as well as for the charges due to distribution and bookkeeping the District and the Region are authorised to make a slight augmentation in price. Payment is to be made in gold or in German bank notes or bank notes of the Banque de France; only in absolute lack of specie, in paper (state bonds, government annuities, shares, titres d'Etat, rentes, actions) whose acceptance and current price shall be fixed through the Intermediary of Banks.

The right to repurchase this paper later is reserved on request.

The Communes are to pay to the Regions, these to the District, and the Delegate of the District will turn over the sum to the officer attached to the C.R.B.

The District receives from the officer a bill which is payable fifteen days after the receipt of the goods.

The delivery will be made once each month.

The order is to be made each 15th of the month by the Delegate of the District in one amount.

The whole quantity asked for is sent to the Delegate of the District and the distribution to the Regions and Communes is to be made in the same manner as that of goods of the C.R.B.

Statistics and reports regarding consumption are to be made only for flour of the C.R.B. Extreme care must be taken that no quantity delivered by the Military Administration be entered in these statistics and reports.

Beginning with the distribution of the flour delivered by the Military Administration the supplements which the Inspection of Etapes has granted to the rations of ravitaillement of the French civil workmen will be abolished.

(Signed) Lieutenant Colonel Huebner

In communicating to you the above instructions, I have the honor to request that you please consult as a matter of urgency with your communes for the purpose of knowing what maximum quantity could be concentrated in the district to permit us to take advantage of the offer of the German authorities which is so interesting.

[*Above P.S. was added to the original in pencil, without signature.*]

[*Translation*]

[101]

Letter, 7 October 1915, Chief of General Staff, Fourth Army, to the Commission, *stating the regulations which had been put into force concerning the harvest in Flanders* (Document 357, chapter viii, is an English translation of this letter)

[102] DOCUMENT NO. 670

Letter, 4 February 1916, General Headquarters to the C.R.B., *declaring that empty tins will be preserved and kept at the disposal of the C.R.B.*

General Headquarters, 4 February 1916

W. B. Poland, Esq.,
Brussels

My dear Mr. Poland:

Referring to the conversation I had with you the other day regarding the various tin boxes, I beg to say that I have given instructions to all the Districts that all tins which may be shipped by you to the French Committees, no matter what their content has been, are to be preserved and kept at your disposal.

I hope that this will satisfy the British Government.

With kindest regards I am,
Yours truly,

(Signed) Count Wengersky

[103] DOCUMENT NO. 671

Letter, 6 February 1916, General Headquarters to C.R.B., *advising that German authorities agree to distribute 100 grams of flour per capita per day to the French population after the 31st March provided the Commission imports 150 grams*

Grosses Hauptquartier, February 6, 1916

W. B. Poland, Esq.,
Bruessel

My dear Mr. Poland,

Referring to our conversation the other day I herewith beg to tell you that the 100 gramms of flour are also going to be given by the German authorities to the French population after March 31st provided that the "Commission for Relief" brings in at least 150 gramms of flour per day and capita.

With kindest regards I am
Yours very truly,

(signed) Count Wengersky

[104]

Letter, 15 February 1916, General Headquarters to C.R.B., *stating that the German Army will deliver 100 grams of flour per head per day to the civil population until next harvest* (See Document 366, chapter viii)

[105] DOCUMENT NO. 672

Letter, 19 February 1916, WHITNEY TO W. B. POLAND, *reporting a meeting with Major von Kessler, concerning the conduct of the relief in Northern France and giving the German decisions on the many points raised*

BRUSSELS, 19 February 1916

W. B. Poland, Esq.,
Director Commission for
Relief in Belgium,
Brussels

MY DEAR POLAND:

I beg to report a meeting with Major von Kessler at Charleville last Tuesday, February 15th, at which the following subjects were discussed at length:

1. The intention of the German authorities as to the length of time they propose delivering the 100 grams per diem per capita of native wheat or flour (125 grs. of wheat or 100 grs. of flour).
2. The circulation of C.R.B. representatives within their district in discharge of their duties, and their attendance of the regular weekly meetings in Brussels for the same purpose.
3. The requisitioning of animals actually necessary for the transportation of C.R.B. foodstuffs.
4. The shipping of carbide from Switzerland direct to districts in the North of France.
5. Our need of a third representative in Flanders.

In addition to Major von Kessler there were present at this meeting Captain zur Strassen, Officer of the Charleville district, Captain Bahr, Officer of the Lille district, and Oberleutnant Schall, formerly of the Charleville district but now stationed at Warsaw, Poland.

1. *Native Wheat.* Major von Kessler declared the intention of the German authorities to be an uninterrupted delivery of the native wheat or flour—125 grs. of wheat or 100 grs. of flour per capita per diem—until the next native crop, on the understanding that the C.R.B. also distribute 150 grs. per diem per capita throughout the same period.

He gave me a written undertaking to that effect which I hand you herewith.

2. *Circulation of Representatives.* That there might arise no misunderstanding between officers and representatives in the future, I called the Major's attention to the general principle underlying all of our work—as expressed in the accord with the German authorities under which we are operating in Northern France—viz. that the C.R.B. flag, so to say, follows the C.R.B. flour. That, in a word, no C.R.B. foodstuffs will be delivered into any section where a C.R.B. representative may not go, except where and when for military reasons the line is closed for a temporary period; and that during such period the officer must visit such closed region and render a satisfactory accounting to the representative. I pointed out that the St.

Mihiel situation exists as a favor to them and is recognized by the C.R.B. neither as a German right under our agreement nor as establishing a precedent, as was plainly stated by us in our letter at the time we agreed to permit the novel arrangement, but it is to be accepted simply as evidence of our disposition to co-operate with them in meeting an unusual and difficult condition.

I made it clear to the Major that the weekly meetings in Brussels are essential to an intelligent and effective co-operation between the executive department and the representatives and that the attendance of the latter is in discharge of their duties and should not be interfered with.

Also I emphasized the fact that we consider it highly important to the contentment of the representatives and therefore in the interest of efficient work, that they have a change of atmosphere regularly and the opportunity of the social relations with their countrymen of which they are deprived at their respective posts; and that the C.R.B. on both these grounds required the presence of the representatives in Brussels for the regular weekly meetings as part and parcel of our working agreement in Northern France. The Major agreed to the right of free circulation by the representatives in their districts, except during the temporary periods as provided for in our agreement, and to the importance to the work of their attendance at the Brussels meetings. He assured me that only exceptional occasions of a temporary nature would interfere with this program.

3. *Requisitioning Horses.* The Major agreed that the requisitioning of animals necessary for the delivery of C.R.B. foodstuffs was not in accord with our working agreement and would not be tolerated by Headquarters. He said that where or when animals so used were required by the German local authorities, the delivery of the C.R.B. foodstuffs would be provided for either by rail or motor without cessation or hindrance of service.

I told him that it was immaterial how the foodstuffs were delivered so long as they reached the people without delay.

(In a word, and to make this paragraph clearer, the Germans do not declare they will not requisition horses, but they promise that if they find it necessary to do so, they will provide other transportation so that the delivery of foodstuffs will be continued without hindrance.) [P.S. added by Mr. Whitney on March 7th.]

4. *Carbide.* The Major declared that carbide bought in Switzerland may be shipped direct over the German roads to the purchasing district in Northern France.

5. *Representative in Flanders.* I informed the Major that the local authorities in Flanders had denied our request for passport for a third representative in that section; that we had found, after a considerable experience and much hard effort and patience, two men unequal to the task assigned them; that the district is too large for two men and we need another to satisfactorily cover the territory and thereby enable us to live up to the guarantees exacted of us by the Allies.

The Major promised to take up the matter with Headquarters and report.

I may add that we discussed also the potato situation which is not especially cheerful at the moment and promises to grow worse rather than better in the immediate future.

The Major says there are plenty of potatoes buried in East Prussia and other sections under German ownership or control, but they cannot be dug up or transported until the freezing weather has come to an end. He thinks that by the end of March or the early part of April there will be potatoes enough to supply everyone with the 200 grs. daily ration, which now reaches only a proportion of the people of Northern France.

Longwy, Valenciennes, and Lille are the sections where a supply is most needed; Longwy has some, but the need of Lille especially is dire and present. If you can import potatoes from Holland to help out Lille it will be a great service.

Sincerely,

(Signed) CASPAR WHITNEY

[106] DOCUMENT NO. 673

Letter, 25 February 1916, WHITNEY TO W. B. POLAND, *describing the intentions of the German military authorities with regard to seeds for vegetables and the 1916 harvest of wheat, rye, and potatoes in Northern France*

CHARLEVILLE, 25 February 1916

W. B. Poland, Esq.,
Director C.R.B.
Brussels

MY DEAR POLAND:

Count Wengersky tells me this morning that Headquarters has decided to supply to the people of Northern France vegetable garden seeds, as far as possible, as well as wheat, rye, and potato seeds. The cost of the wheat, rye, and potato seeds will be deducted from such money allowance or price as is given the people when the crops are taken over by the military authorities; the vegetable garden seeds will be sold the people probably against local *bons de ville*—although no definite decision has yet been reached on that point.

As in 1915, the product of the people's vegetable gardens will not be requisitioned by the military; on the other hand the Germans assume no obligation against the owners of such vegetable gardens selling their produce of their own free will to whomsoever they wish, either to the military authorities or to individuals, soldiers, or civilians, it being understood that the product of such gardens belongs to the owners to dispose of as they desire and at such price as they can secure, whether the seeds come to them through the Germans or the C.R.B.

The Count informs me also that the intention of the German authorities this year is to requisition the entire wheat and rye crops

as in 1915, but to pay cash—i.e., *bons de ville,* or marks or francs for the *entire crop*—requiring from the people the same character of money for the wheat or flour delivered to the people from the crop so requisitioned. It may be that the Germans may decide to deduct the price of the deliveries subsequently to be made from the price fixed and given at the time the crop is requisitioned.

Sincerely,

(Signed) CASPER WHITNEY

[107] DOCUMENT NO. 674

Letter, 10 May 1916, GENERAL HEADQUARTERS TO C.R.B. REPRESENTATIVE, *granting protection from requisition to herds of milch-cows which the C.R.B. proposed to introduce from Belgium*

GREAT HEADQUARTERS, 10 May 1916

Gardner Richardson, Esq.,
C.R.B. Representative,
Charleville

DEAR MR. RICHARDSON:

Referring to the conversation I had with you the other day, I would like to state that herds of milk-cows which the C.R.B. might introduce for the civil population will be treated in exactly the same way as all C.R.B. foodstuffs. They will not be requisitioned but kept at the disposal of the civil population. We propose that you should send these milk-cows to the respective communes and that the local C.R.B. committees distribute milk, butter, or cheese receiving cards to those people whom they think mostly in need. The milk, etc., would of course be free of requisitioning or official buying by the troops.

You will readily see that it is impossible for us to guarantee that no single individual of the military forces occasionally might buy some of the stuffs from individuals.

We think it is necessary that the cows have a brand mark on the horns, this branding to be executed in Belgium before sending the cows to Northern France in order to prevent misuse of the branding iron.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) WENGERSKY

[108]

Memorandum, 26 August 1916, of a conference and agreement between MAJOR VON KESSLER AND KELLOGG *of the C.R.B., regarding reservations of food in Northern France and the Belgian Operations Zone and increase in rations to the civil population* (See Document 377, chapter viii)

[109] DOCUMENT NO. 675

Declaration, 21 February 1917, by General Headquarters, *that imported seeds and the resulting vegetables will not be requisitioned in Northern France*

Verpflegungsoffizier
für die Zivilbevölkerung
im besetzten Gebiete von
Nordfrankreich & Flandern

W. Nr. 15/317

H.Qu., Mézières-Charleville, den 21. Februar 1917

Es wird der Commission for Relief in Belgium, Brüssel, hiermit bestätigt, dass weder die von ihr in das besetzte Gebiet von Nordfrankreich eingeführten Gemüsesämereien zur Bestellung der Gärten seitens der Zivilbevölkerung, noch die aus diesen Sämereien gezogenen Gemüse, von Seiten der Heeresverwaltung requiriert werden werden.

Hauptmann
beim Stabe des Generalintendanten
des Feldheeres

[110]

Letter, 30 July 1917, General Government to the Spanish-Dutch Committee, *stating that the General Staff had agreed to reserve the total crops of the Army Zone for the civil population* (Document 384, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Generalgouverneur in Belgien

1 No V. 3711

Brüssel, den 30. Juli 1917

Dem Comité Hispano Néerlandais teile ich ergebenst mit, dass laut telegraphischer Mitteilung des Grafen Wengersky die gesammte Ernte im besetzten Gebiet von Nordfrankreich und der Etappe Flandern in Brotfrucht, Roggen und Weizen, für die Zivilbevölkerung reserviert werden wird. Da die Ernte aber erheblich kleiner als die vorjährige ausfallen wird, würde es angezeigt sein schon vom 1. September ab auf 150 gr. Mehl pro Tag herunterzugehen. Über die Kartoffelernte kann noch nichts Bestimmtes gesagt werden; Graf Wengersky hofft jedoch, dass die Ration auf etwa 200 gr. pro Tag und Kopf wird festgestzt werden können.

I. A.
(gez.) Rieth

An das Comité Hispano-Néerlandais
pour la Protection du Ravitaillement
Brüssel

[111] DOCUMENT NO. 676

Telegram, 8 August 1917, GENERAL HEADQUARTERS TO THE C.R.B., *guaranteeing restitution of skins, hoofs, and horns of live cattle imported by the Commission*

Télégramme du 8 août 1917 de Mézières:

Für Relief Commission zu dortigem Telegramm Nummer 426 vom 4. dieses. Falls lebendes Vieh für Zivilbevölkerung Nordfrankreichs und Flandern aus Holland eingeführt wird garantieren wir Rückgabe der Häute Hufe und Hörner an Comité National Brüssel.—i. V. HAUPTMANN GRAF WENGERSKY, HAUPTMANN ZUR STRASSEN.

[112] DOCUMENT NO. 677

Letter, 10 January 1918, VON DER LANCKEN TO VILLALOBAR, *announcing the transfer of the Givet-Fumay region to the Army Zone, involving changes in feeding measures*

Politische Abteilung
bei dem
Gouverneur in Belgien

V. 4624

BRUXELLES, le 10 janvier 1918

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

J'ai l'honneur de porter à la connaissance de Votre Excellence que pour des motifs d'ordre militaire la région de Givet-Fumay faisant partie du territoire placé sous les ordres de Monsieur le Gouverneur Général en Belgique sera transférée à l'étape de la première armée. La frontière franco-belge de Fumay jusqu'à Hautes Rivières formera la nouvelle limite entre le territoire administré par Monsieur le Gouverneur Général et celui cédé à l'étape de la première armée.

Le transfert entrera en vigueur le 15 janvier 1918.

Votre Excellence voudra bien se rappeler à cette occasion que les garanties accordées par Monsieur le Gouverneur Général que j'ai eu l'honneur de Lui communiquer par ma note du 14 avril 1916 ne s'appliquent qu'aux produits d'origine belge. Elles n'étaient donc pas applicables aux produits originaires de la région de Givet, pas plus que de celle de Maubeuge transférée antérieurement au territoire d'étapes de la 2^{me} armée.

Je prie Votre Excellence de bien vouloir communiquer ce qui précède au Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation et au Comité Hispano-Néerlandais et de suggérer à ces organismes de prendre les dispositions nécessaires pour que le ravitaillement de la population civile de la région susdite soit assuré dorénavant par le Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France. Le Comité National pourrait alors soit reprendre les stocks de vivres qu'il a en magasin dans le territoire de Givet-Fumay, soit les céder au Comité Français. Si des

vivres de provenance belge devaient se trouver actuellement dans des magasins de cette région ils seraient ramenés dans le territoire administré par Monsieur le Gouverneur Général pour y être utilisés dans l'intérêt de la population civile.

Je saisis l'occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurances de ma haute considération.

(s.) LANCKEN

[113] DOCUMENT NO. 678

Telegram, 5 March 1918, GENERAL HEADQUARTERS TO SPANISH-DUTCH COMMITTEE, *extending the seed guarantee to Flanders*

DEUTSCHE VERMITTLUNGSSTELLE C.N.,
BRUXELLES

SS Hqu. Mézières 3138 5/3 9/50 m.
Für Direktor Langenbergh beginnt zu dortiger a 4195
Garantie für Sämereien wird auf Etappe Flandern ausgedehnt werden.—GRAF WENGERSKY. W 58/1258

[114] DOCUMENT NO. 679

Declaration, 15 March 1918, by GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *regarding seed imports and resulting crops in Northern France and in Belgian Army Zone*

Abschrift
Verpflegungsoffizier
für die Zivilbevölkerung
im bezetzten Gebiete von
Nordfrankreich & Flandern

W. No 59/1276

CHARLEVILLE, den 15. Maerz 1918

An das
Comité Hispano-Néerlandais pour la
protection du Ravitaillement
Bruessel

In Beantwortung des dortigen Schreibens A–4150 vom 21.2.18 uebersende ich Ihnen in der Anlage die vom dem Herrn Generalintendanten des Feldheeres persoenlich gefertigte Erklaerung ueber Beschlagnahmefreiheit der einzufuehrenden Saemereien und der aus denselben zu erntenden Erzeugnisse sowohl im franzoesischen wie im belgischen Etappengebiet.

(S.) WENGERSKY
Hauptmann

1 Anlage

ERKLAERUNG

Auf Wunsch des Comité Hispano-Néerlandais pour la protection du Ravitaillement en Belgique et dans le Nord de la France,

gibt hiermit die Deutsche Oberste Heeresleitung, vertreten durch den Generalintendanten des Feldheeres die Zusicherung, dass die Sämereien irgend welcher Art, die, sei es von der "Commission for Relief in Belgium" oder von dem Comité d'alimentation du Nord de la France in das besetzte Gebiet von Nordfrankreich und belgische Etappengebiet eingeführt werden, von jeder Beschlagnahme befreit sind.

Die gleiche Zusicherung wird für die aus diesen Sämereien geernteten Erzeugnissen gegeben.—Die Zivilbevölkerung des besetzten Gebietes hat freie Verfügung darüber und diese Ernteerzeugnisse geniessen den gleichen Schutz, wie alle von der C.R.B. eingeführten Lebensmittel.

Das Comité Hispano-Néerlandais wird das Recht haben, sich im Rahmen der zwischen der deutschen Obersten Heeresleitung und dem Comité hierüber vereinbarten allgemeinen Grundsätze durch seine Delegierten davon zu überzeugen, dass die Bestimmungen, die durch die gegenwärtige Erklärung getroffen sind, beachtet werden.

(S.) ————————

Generalmajor und Generalintendant des Feldheeres

[115] DOCUMENT NO. 680

Declaration, 24 April 1918, by GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *exempting privately owned clothing from requisition in the Army Zone*

DÉCLARATION DU COMMANDANT EN CHEF DE L'ARMÉE

Il résulte d'informations reçues que la C.R.B. se propose d'importer d'ici peu des quantité importantes de vêtements, étoffes, chaussures, etc., ... destinées aux populations civiles de la Belgique et du Nord de la France.

Ayant appris que l'inventaire des stocks de vêtements dans les maisons privées, tel qu'il a été ordonné par l'Inspection des Etapes à Mons, pourrait mettre obstacles à l'importation des marchandises ci-dessus, le Commandement de l'Armée déclare par la présente qu'il n'a pas l'intention de requisitionner les vêtements maintenant en possession de personnes privées dans le territoire des Etapes et des opérations militaires, et qui sont de leur usage personnel.

Si ces intentions devaient être modifiées, le Commandement de l'Armée donnerait un préavis d'au moins trois mois, avant d'effectuer les réquisitions projetées.

Quartier général, 24 avril 1918.

(S.) NAHNDORFF

Le Quartier-Maître général

[116]

Letter, 2 September 1918, General Headquarters to Spanish-Dutch Committee, *relative to the prospects of the 1918 harvest and the measures adopted to increase the food supply in the Army Zone* (Document 385, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

Verpflegungsoffizier
für die Zivilbevölkerung im
besetzten Gebiete von
Nordfrankreich und Flandern

W. Nr. 25/1782

Mézières-Charleville, H.Q. den 2. September 1918

Lieber Herr Langenbergh,

Bezugnehmend auf unsere verschiedentlichen mündlichen Besprechungen und Ihr Schreiben vom 8. August, möchte ich Ihnen im Nachstehenden einige Angaben über die Verwendung der vorjährigen Ernte und die Aussichten für das kommende Wirtschaftsjahr mitteilen:

Die Ernte des Jahres 1916/17 hat ungefähr einen Ertrag von 140.000 Tonnen Brotgetreide gebracht.—Hiervon ist für die Neubestellung des Jahres 1917/18 der Betrag von ca 12.000 Tonnen als Saatgut zurückgestellt worden: es ergibt sich also, dass 128.000 Tonnen Brotgetreide, oder zu 97 % Ausmahlung: 124.000 Tonnen Mehl zur Verfügung standen.—Wir haben an die Einwohner 132.800 Tonnen Mehl ausgegeben, sodass, um diese Zahl zu erreichen, von deutschen Erzeugnissen 8.800 Tonnen Mehl zu der hier gemachten Ernte hinzugeliefert worden sind.

Bei den Erträgnissen müssen Sie berücksichtigen, dass bei dem völligen Mangel an Kunstdünger in dem besetzten Gebiet und den verhältnismässig geringen Möglichkeiten Natur-Dünger zu haben, die Ertragsfähigkeit der Aecker naturgemäss sehr herunter geht. Es wird also von uns die Politik getrieben, nach Möglichkeit nur die wirklich noch ertragsfähigen Aecker zu bestellen, damit keine unnötige Verschwendung an Saatgut eintritt; hieraus ergibt sich auch, dass die Anbauflächen immer geringer werden. In dem Erntejahr 1917/18 ist infolgedessen wiederum eine Einschränkung der Anbauflächen um 55 000 Hektar eingetreten; der Ernteertrag wird dementsprechend geringer sein; genaue Zahlen über die Ernte 1917/18 sind natürlich noch nicht zur Verfügung; ich habe mich jedoch bemüht, von Seiten der landwirtschaftlichen Sachverständigen eine möglichst genaue Ertragsziffer zu erhalten und kann sagen, dass die Ernte ein Ergebnis von 110.000 Tonnen nicht überschreiten wird. Wir müssen von diesem Betrag mindestens 10.000 Tonnen als Saatgut für das kommende Wirtschaftsjahr zurück stellen; wenn wir also im kommenden Jahre durchschnittlich auf den Kopf und Tag 75 Gramm Mehl rechnen, so wird die deutsche Verwaltung voraussichtlich circa 5.000 Tonnen Mehl wieder aus deutschen Beständen als Zuschuss für die Zivilbevölkerung zuschiessen müssen. Sie sehen also, mein lieber Herr Langenbergh, dass eine Erhöhung der zu gebenden Mehlportion nicht

wird eintreten können. Nach Mitteilung des Herrn Generalintendanten des Feldheeres ist es noch nicht zu übersehen, ob es möglich sein wird, in den ersten Monaten vielleicht eine Erhöhung der Mehlportion auf 100 Gramm zu ermöglichen; sollte dies vielleicht doch noch möglich sein, so möchte ich ganz besonders hervorheben, dass in den späteren Monaten eine Reduzierung unter 75 Gramm eintreten müsste, da wie gesagt, schon die Portion von 75 Gramm einen Zuschuss aus deutschen Mitteln erfordert.

Was nun die Versorgung der Bevölkerung mit Gemüse anlangt, so ist bereits seit zwei oder drei Jahren in den Bezirken Charleville, Vervins vollkommen, im Bezirk Hautmont teilweise, die Ihnen von mir mitgeteilte Bewirtschaftung des Landes durch die Verpflegungsoffiziere durchgeführt worden. Diese Bewirtschaftung besteht darin, dass jedem Landes-Einwohner zwei Aar Land zu seiner Bewirtschaftung überlassen werden; die Felder werden von den Landeseinwohnern bestellt, sie werden mit Schildern versehen und unbedingt gegen jede Art von Requisition geschützt. Die Verpflegungsoffiziere wachen darüber, dass diese Bestimmungen, welche von allen Militärbehörden anerkannt sind, innegehalten werden. Die Erzeugnisse dieser Felder stehen den Einwohnern uneingeschränkt zur Verfügung. Hierdurch ist erreicht worden dass die Einwohner in denjenigen Distrikten, welche diese Massnahme bereits durchgeführt hatten, in sehr reichlicher Weise mit Gemüse, Kartoffeln, Steckrüben, Kohl, etc. versorgt worden sind. Leider konnten sich vor zwei oder drei Jahren, als ich diesen Vorschlag machte, einige der Distrikte nicht entschliessen, dieses System des Feldanbaus einzuführen, und infolgedessen ist bisher die Gemüseversorgung in den nördlichen Distrikten nicht so ausreichend gewesen, wie ich gewünscht hatte.

Es ist mir nunmehr gelungen, alle Distrikte dahin zu bringen, dass sie dieses System anwenden wollen; da aber die vorhergehenden Jahre in diesem Sinne nicht gearbeitet worden ist, stehen denjenigen Distrikten, welche die Einrichtung jetzt erst anfangen, das nötige Saatgut, besonders an Kartoffeln etc. nicht zur Verfügung, welches in Charleville, Vervins und Hautmont (in den beiden ersten in reichlichem Masse, in dem letzten aber auch genügend) aus ihren vorhergehenden Ernten mit Leichtigkeit zurückgestellt werden konnte.

Ich erwähne noch, das [für] die grösseren Städte, wo der einzelne Einwohner sich nicht so in der Landwirtschaft betätigen kann, die Einrichtung getroffen wird, dass die Landgemeinden die Bestellung des Landes für die mit übernehmen.

In Ihrem Schreiben über die Beschaffung von Sämereien ist insofern ein Irrtum unterlaufen, dass Sie schreiben, wir hätten für 12 Millionen Sämereien beschafft; dies ist natürlich nicht richtig; die Beschaffung von Sämereien durch uns, grösstenteils aus Deutschland, betrug etwa 1½ Million Mark; dabei haben wir darauf gesehen, der Bevölkerung nach Möglichkeit Samen für den Kohl-Anbau zu besorgen und diesen hauptsächlich demjenigen Teil der Distrikte gegeben, wo die Bepflanzung von Kartoffeln nicht möglich war. Es besteht also die Aussicht, dass in diesem Jahre die Bevölkerung in ausgiebigstem Masse mit Gemüse versorgt sein wird. Es wird naturgemäss mein Bestreben sein, denjenigen Teilen, wo der Ertrag der Einwohner-

Felder nicht besonders gut ist, anzustreben, denselben aus Heeresbeständen Kartoffeln oder Steckrüben zur Verfügung zu stellen.

Sobald die Preise für die Belieferung der Bevölkerung mit Getreide oder Mehl feststehen, werde ich Ihnen dieselben sofort mitteilen, so dass Sie darüber vollkommen orientiert sein werden.

Ich hoffe, das Sie aus dem Vorstehenden ersehen werden, dass von Seiten der deutschen Heeresverwaltung bezw. den Verpflegungsoffizieren Alles geschehen wird, um der Bevölkerung möglichst viel zuzuführen.

Mit dem Ausdruck meiner vorzüglichsten Hochachtung.

Ihr sehr ergebener

(gez.) Graf Wengersky

[117]

Minutes, 10 September 1918, of a meeting of representatives of the German General Staff and the relief organizations, relative to the 1918 harvest and the rations for 1918–19 (Document 386, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

Comité Hispano-Néerlandais
Pour la Protection du Ravitaillement

Réunion du 10 septembre 1918

Présents:

M. M. le Comte Wengersky
le Capitaine Schroeder
Langenbergh
Baetens
Van brée

La séance est ouverte à 11 h.

Récolte 1918–1919.

Le Comte Wengersky confirme, en ce qui concerne les prévisions pour la prochaine récolte dans les Etapes et le territoire du Nord de la France, les indications qu'il a données à M. Langenbergh dans sa letter datée du 2 septembre courant. Il peut, des à présent, dire que les arrangements nécessaires ont été pris pour que, pendant le mois d'octobre, il soit distributé 100 grs. de farine indigène par tête d'habitant; pour le mois de novembre, l'on espère qu'il en sera de même. Cependant comme la ration moyenne est évaluée, pour toute l'année, à 75 grammes par tête d'habitant et par jour, il sera nécessaire, pour les subséquents de réduire cette ration de façon à garder la moyenne générale de 75 grammes. Il ajoute qu'il est absolument impossible de faire plus que cela.

En ce qui concerne les *légumes indigènes,* en dehors des dispositions qui ont été prises dans certains groupes d'armées par les officiers du ravitaillement, pour assurer au moyen des cultures indigènes, des vivres à la population, il espère pouvoir importer pour

les grosses agglomérations de Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing et Valenciennes, des pommes de terre qui seront expédiées d'Allemagne par la voie de Nuremonde. Le Comte Wengersky n'est cependant pas encore en mesure d'affirmer que ses démarches réuissiront.

Il est fait remarquer au Comte Wengersky que ces conditions sont très peu favorables et qu'il est regrettable qu'elles soient en régression sur celles de l'année dernière. En effet, pendant l'année 1917–1918, la moyenne des distributions journalières de farine indigène a atteint 94.3 grammes par tête d'habitant, alors que la moyenne pour l'exercice prochain tomberait à 75 grammes. En outre, l'année dernière, il avait été promis un minimum de 200 grammes de pommes de terre, alors que cette année, aucune promesse de ce genre n'est faite.

M. le Comte Wengersky fait remarquer qu'une diminution dans la production des céréales est inévitable; la lettre qu'il a écrite à M. Langenbergh en donne les motifs.

En ce qui concerne les pommes de terre, le Comte Wengersky fait observer qu'en fait, les arrangements de cette année sont beaucoup plus satisfaisants que ceux de l'année dernière. En effet, l'année dernière, sauf dans les Flandres où la ration entière de pommes de terre a été distribuée et même largement dépassée, des quantités peu importantes ont été réellement fournies. Avec les arrangements actuels, les districts français seront mieux ravitaillés qu'ils ne l'ont été l'année dernière.

En effet, les districts qui ont fait des cultures, tels que les districts de Charleville, St-Quentin et Vervins, recevront des quantités importantes de pommes de terre. Dans les Flandres également, la ration sera plus importante que 200 grammes par tête et par jour; pour Lille et Valenciennes, il espère, au moyen de pommes de terre d'Allemagne, fournir des contingents importants à ces localités.

Il est demandé au Comte Wengersky que les céréales indigènes soient effectivement utilisées sur place et qu'elles ne soient pas remplacées par de la farine allemande.

Le Comte Wengersky dit, qu'à ce sujet, il est dans l'impossibilité de donner une garantie formelle. En effet, les besoins des troupes nécessitent quelquefois l'utilisation des stocks se trouvant sur place, ceux-ci étant remplacés par des farines venant d'Allemagne. Néanmoins, il peut donner l'assurance, en ce qui concerne les régions des Flandres, Lille et Valenciennes et une partie de Hautmont, que la majeure partie des farines indigènes y consommées proviendra de la récolte indigène.

Il est demandé au Comte Wengersky de bien vouloir adresser une lettre officielle au Comité Hispano-Néerlandais au sujet de la question des récoltes indigènes et de faire une communication similaire par l'intermédiaire de la V.C.N. au Comité National, spécialement en ce qui concerne la région des Flandres.

Il reste donc entendu que pour le mois d'octobre il sera délivré 100 grammes de farine indigène comme aussi probablement, pour le mois de novembre. La ration générale de farine pourra ainsi être augmentée de 25 grammes.

De son côté M. Langenbergh demandera à la C.R.B. de bien vouloir, a partir du mois de décembre, allouer un contingent de farine

importée de 175 grammes au lieu de 150 grammes, de façon à pouvoir maintenir la ration générale à 250 grammes. Le supplément de farine indigène réparti pendant les mois d'octobre et novembre sera réduit sur les fournitures du second semestre c'est-à-dire à partir d'avril 1919. Dans ces conditions, il sera fourni aux habitants du N.F. et du territoire des étapes belges, comme farine indigène pendant le mois de septembre une ration journalière de 75 grammes, pendant les mois d'octobre et si possible novembre 100 grammes, pendant les mois de décembre, janvier et février 75 grammes et les six mois suivants, environ 65 grammes.

Comité Exécutif du C.F.

Il est demandé au Comte Wengersky quelle suite a pu être reservée à la lettre lui adressée par M. Langenbergh au sujet de la réunion des membres du Comité Exécutif du C.F.

Le Comte Wengersky répond qu'il est actuellement en négociations avec le Quartier Général pour faire adopter les mesures préconisées par le Comité Hispano-Néerlandais et qu'il espère bien pouvoir aboutir. En attendant, il s'arrangera pour que le passeport de M. Blondet soit délivré en même temps qu'un passeport au délégué de Valenciennes, de façon à ce que ces délégués puissent discuter ensemble la question du ravitaillement de leurs districts qui sont voisins.

En ce qui concerne M. Labbé la question du passeport est sur le point d'être arrangée. Il sera cependant impossible d'obtenir un passeport pour Madame Labbé. Le passeport de M. Labbé lui permettra de résider à Bruxelles pendant un certain temps sans permettre cependant des voyages hebdomadaires réguliers entre Lille et Bruxelles.

Fabrication de Biscuits.

Le Comte Wengersky signale qu'il a entrepris une serie de démarches à Bruxelles en vue d'obtenir la reprise de la fabrication des biscuits.

Quoique l'opposition de la part du Président de la Central des récoltes soit très vive, il espère qu'il arrivera à une solution donnant en partie satisfaction au Comité et qui lui permettra de fabriquer un genre de couque scolaire, se rapprochant des biscuits.

Sel.

Le Comte Wengersky signale qu'il a reçu des demandes très nombreuses pour augmenter les expéditions de sel vers les territoires du Nord de la France et des Etapes. Comme il a appris d'autre part que la consommation de sel n'était plus réglementée ni limitée en Allemagne, il fait des démarches auprès du Reichskommissär, pour savoir si actuellement le contingent de sel du Nord de la France et des Etapes est encore limité à 2.000T. par mois, ainsi que cela a été décidé fin 1917.

Douai.

Il est demandé au Comte Wengersky s'il n'est pas possible de prendre des mesures spéciales pour essayer de sauver une partie des approvisionnements de la C.R.B. qui se trouvent dans les magasins

de Douai. Le Comte Wengersky dit que le Rittmeister Neuerbourg s'occupe de cette question et fera l'impossible pour essayer de sauver le plus de marchandises possibles, mais qu'il craint néanmoins, qu'une grosse partie des produits ne soit définitivement perdue.

La séance est levée à midi et quart.

[118]

Telegram, 13 September 1918, General Headquarters to Spanish-Dutch Committee, *stating that the daily ration from local bread grains would be about 75 grams during 1918–19* (Document 387, chapter viii, is an English translation of the following)

General-Gouvernement
in Belgien

Deutsche Vermittlungsstelle C.N.

Nr. C.28696

Brüssel, den 13. September 1918

EILT: Soeben traf von der V.C.N. vom Grafen Wengersky folgendes Telegramm ein welches zur dortigen Kenntnisnahme ergebenst übermittelt wird:

"Bitte Herrn Direktor Langenbergh mitteilen:

"Wie im Vorjahre wird auch in diesem Erntejahre das gesamte Erträgnis der Ernte an Brotfrucht, Roggen und Weizen für die Bevölkerung reserviert bleiben; nach Abzug des nötigen Saatgutes für das kommende Jahr wird dies die Ausgabe einer Ration pro Kopf und Tag von etwa fünfundsiebzig Gramm Mehl möglich machen. Für die Versorgung mit Kartoffeln oder Gemüse ist sämtlichen Einwohnern in Nordfrankreich je ein Feld von zweihundert Quadratmeter Grösse zur Verfügung gestellt, welches unter Aufsicht des Verpflegungsoffiziers steht und dessen Ertrag gegen jede Requisition geschützt der Zivilbevölkerung frei zur Verfügung steht. Sämereien hierfür sind von mir in ausgiebigem Masse beschafft. Ausserdem bemühe ich mich, in der nördlichen Teilen, wo aus Mangel an Saatkartoffeln die Kartoffelernte voraussichtlich klein sein wird, von Deutschland Kartoffeln heranzutransportieren."

(gez.) Graf Wengersky
(S.) Rieth

An das Comité Hispano-Néerlandais
z. H. des Herrn Direktor Langenbergh
Hier

APPENDICES

Appendix I

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE C.R.B.

The administrative structure of the C.R.B. was determined in both scope and detail by the nature of the problem of relief in Belgium and Northern France. That problem, as an earlier chapter has shown, was, briefly, the provisioning of a population of over 9,000,000, deprived of their means of income, cut off from the source of their supplies, and concentrated in a territory of 20,000 square miles occupied by the forces of an enemy power. Immediately after the invasion voluntary relief committees, caring first for refugees and homeless, sprang up, especially in the cities. These independent and widely separated committees soon secured the small stocks of food still remaining in the country. Their efforts could, however, but postpone the crisis, for famine threatened the whole population, rich and poor, unless importation of over 100,000 tons each month was assured. Into this emergency came the Commission for Relief in Belgium, to which the belligerents granted permission, under stringent conditions, to penetrate the blockade and distribute relief. By this means a way was found through neutral Holland for the passage of supplies from the west to the Belgians and French within the German lines. The relief organization by no means came into the field full grown, but its growth, in the emergency, was rapid. The summary of its administrative structure as outlined here takes it at its full development.

1. *Relief Organizations*

Three collaborating organizations were responsible for the control and administration of relief in the occupied regions of Belgium and Northern France. These organizations were:

The Commission for Relief in Belgium (C.R.B.), directed by Americans and under the patronage of the American Ambassadors and Ministers in London, Brussels, The Hague, Berlin, and Paris, and the Spanish Ambassador and Minister, respectively, in London and Brussels, and the Netherlands Minister at Havre, had full responsibility for all the phases of collection of finance and transportation of relief outside the occupied territory. Through its representatives on the Belgian and French committees it was responsible for the strict fulfillment of the guarantees and stipulations of the belligerent governments in respect to relief distribution within the occupied territories.

The *Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation* (Comité National), under the patronage of the Spanish and American Ministers in Brussels, was composed principally of Belgians, but it included in its membership American representatives of the C.R.B. This Belgian

central committee through its provincial, regional, and communal subcommittees was responsible for the distribution of relief throughout Belgium.

The *Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France* (Comité Français), a French committee with headquarters in Brussels, included in its membership representatives of the C.R.B. and the Comité National. In Northern France, district, regional, and communal committees were responsible for the distribution of relief and over these the C.R.B. exercised control through its representatives in the field.

Aside from these three principal organizations there were three others of later origin engaged in administration:

The *Comité Hispano-Néerlandais pour la Protection du Ravitaillement en Belgique et dans le Nord de la France,* established in 1917, was composed of neutral Dutch and Spanish citizens under the patronage of the Spanish Ambassador in London, the Spanish Consul-General in London, the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Spanish and Netherlands Ministers in Brussels, and the Netherlands Minister at Havre. Upon America's entry into the war, C.R.B. representatives in Belgium and Northern France were withdrawn, and Spanish and Dutch representatives of the committee, which was organized for this purpose, performed the duties of the Americans in Belgium in respect to belligerent guarantees and negotiations with the Germans.

The *Comité Général de Ravitaillement des Régions Libérées,* a French committee with headquarters at Lille, was organized after the Armistice to replace the Comité Français in the administration of relief in Northern France, pending the assumption of these responsibilities by the French Government.

The *Comité d'Assistance des Régions Libérées avec le Concours de la C.R.B.* organized in 1919 with French and American membership to continue the charitable work in Northern France after the dissolution of the Comité Général de Ravitaillement des Régions Libérées.

Ranged under the three principal committees, the C.R.B., Comité National and Comité Français, were a number of emergency bodies. Nearly 2,000 committees, scattered throughout the world, were engaged under the leadership of the C.R.B. in the collection of contributions for relief in money and kind. Within Belgium and Northern France, under the three principal committees in co-operation, there were nearly 5,000 separate committees dealing with food supplies, and an almost equal number dispensing charity.

The following table shows the approximate membership of the relief organization:

Administration

1. The Commission for Relief in Belgium. American personnel and supervising staff. Average membership..... 55

Appeal Committees

1. The Commission for Relief in Belgium
2. State, city, and special committees in the United States, Hawaii, and Philippine Islands. Approximate membership..... 50,000

3. Associated committees in the British Empire, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, etc.; in Argentine, in Holland, in Italy, and elsewhere. Approximate membership 26,500

Distributing Committees

1. Belgium. The Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation and its subsidiary provincial, regional, and communal committees. Approximate membership..... 40,000
2. Northern France. The Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France (after 1918 the Comité Général de Ravitaillement des Régions Libérées) and its subsidiary district, regional, and communal committees. Approximate membership..... 15,000

Total approximate membership of relief organization....131,555

2. *Organization outside the Occupied Territories*

The fundamental functions of relief administration outside the German lines were the mobilization of finances, i.e. charity and government subventions, and the purchase and transportation of supplies. These were the responsibilities solely of the Commission for Relief in Belgium. To discharge these responsibilities the C.R.B. established its central office in London, with main branch offices in New York and in Rotterdam. For the collection of funds and gifts in kind it promoted the establishment of allied and associated committees in the centers of population throughout the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, Holland, Italy, Spain, Argentine, Hawaii, Philippine Islands, and elsewhere. In the management of purchase and transportation of supplies the C.R.B. set up business offices or secured agency representatives in the principal purchasing centers and ports of the world, and it maintained large technical staffs in New York and in Rotterdam. These offices and committees all over the world, engaged in the diversified operations of assembling relief, communicated by cable or post direct, or through New York, to the central office of the C.R.B. in London. By especially privileged telegraph and courier service the London office maintained rapid communication through the belligerent lines with the Brussels office of the C.R.B.

3. *Organization within Belgium and Northern France*

The admirable organizing and administrative abilities of the Belgians and French promptly created a structure for relief distribution which rapidly developed into an efficient country-wide system, despite the presence of an occupying army. The fundamental policy was decentralization based on the normal political administrative divisions of Belgium and France. Thus under the Comité National and Comité Français came provincial and district committees, and under these, regional committees, and finally, communal committees. These communal committees, headed by the burgomasters in Belgium and *maires* in Northern France, included both communal officials

and volunteers. The provincial committees in Belgium were composed of representatives of all sections of the province and two local delegates of the Comité National. The district committees in Northern France were of similar character, but their contact with the Comité Français in Brussels was obtained through representatives of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, two or more of whom collaborated with each provincial and district committee. In local matters the provincial and district committees had wide autonomy. Questions affecting the country as a whole were, in Belgium, decided at regular meetings of delegates, from the provincial committees, with the executives of the Comité National and the C.R.B. Due to restrictions on movement of civilians in Northern France the district committees of that area were represented in Brussels by American C.R.B. delegates. In addition to a central Brussels office the C.R.B. set up offices in each of the eleven provinces of Belgium and in the six districts of Northern France. The following table shows the administrative divisions, with the area and population and the number of communes and warehouses in each:

BELGIUM

Provincial Committees	Regional Warehouses	Communes	Area Sq. Miles	Population October, 1917
1. Antwerp	3	168	1,093	1,004,854
2. Brabant	23	344	1,148	722,632
3. Brussels	1	18	120	786,211
4. East Flanders	26	316	1,600	1,206,456
5. West Flanders (N)	6	56	365	224,227
6. West Flanders (S)	4	67	424	272,431
7. Hainaut	9	446	1,437	1,248,911
8. Liege	6	344	1,117	907,733
9. Limbourg	14	210	931	285,741
10. Luxembourg	21	234	1,706	249,945
11. Namur	21	395	1,414	380,953
Totals	134	2,598	11,355	7,289,994

NORTHERN FRANCE

District Committees	Regional Warehouses	Communes	Area Sq. Miles	Population October, 1917
1. Lille	6	107	345	560,002
2. Valenciennes	6	339	890	493,775
3. St. Quentin	21	511	1,652	291,977
4. Vervins	30	431	1,758	187,204
5. Charleville	21	339	1,847	152,000
6. Longwy	22	406	1,608	109,548
Totals	106	2,133	8,100	1,794,506

BELGIUM AND NORTHERN FRANCE

Provincial and District Committees	Regional Warehouses	Communes	Area Sq. Miles	Population October, 1917
Totals 17	240	4,731	19,455	9,084,500

4. *Volunteer Service*

Because of the universal sympathy for Belgium it was possible for the C.R.B. to rely in a large measure on volunteer service and to secure the active participation, in the various departments of its work, of persons of wide experience and special training. The executive work was carried on by volunteers of broad experience in commercial and public affairs, and most of the department heads and many assistants were volunteers, paid men being employed only in specialized branches for which no experienced volunteer service was available. This policy of volunteer service extended far beyond the personnel of the relief organization. Governments, commercial firms, banks, transportation companies, gave invaluable advice and special services. Most of the firms engaged in commercial operations on behalf of the C.R.B. either returned their fees or made no charges. In the United States, Canada, and the Argentine the C.R.B. secured concessions in rates in rail transportation and a large amount of free transport in addition to general favors in extra facilities in handling and delivery of goods. Banks gave their exchange services and paid the full rate of interest on deposits; insurance was facilitated by the British Government; and the firms which placed insurance subscribed the equivalent of their fees. In Holland the C.R.B. was exempted from harbor dues, and the Netherlands Government granted free telegraphic service as well as free rail transport to Belgium. The German military authorities in Belgium abolished customs and canal dues on all C.R.B. imports and reduced railway rates one-half. The measure of the value of these free services and concessions was not only the minimum administrative costs[1] of the organization but the low price at which foodstuffs were delivered to the consumer in Belgium and Northern France.

5. *Operating Divisions*

The two principal forms of activity of the relief organization were the provisioning of the entire population of Belgium and Northern France, and the care of the destitute. The two distinct divisions of the organization responsible for these operations were the Provisioning Department and the Benevolent Department, and this separation existed not only in the C.R.B., but in the co-operating bodies and in subcommittees wherever their activities extended to more than one function.

The Provisioning Department purchased, transported, and distributed relief supplies for the entire 9,000,000 population. All these goods were sold through the 4,731 communal stores established for this purpose. In the sale of these goods a small charge above actual cost was applied, and the surplus so raised created a reserve against

[1] The total cost of overhead and administration of the C.R.B. including a large burden of the cost of administration of associated appeal committees all over the world was considerably less than one-half of one per cent (actually 0.43%).

losses and destruction of goods and became a source of support to the Benevolent Department.

The Benevolent Department was the agency through which the charity of the world was mobilized and distributed. Charitable funds as collected were applied, through the Provisioning Department, to the purchase of supplies, and these, with gifts in kind, were resold to the people. The entire receipts due to these transactions were turned over to the distributing side of the Benevolent Department. With these sums supplemented by the advances from the Provisioning Department out of its reserve, the Benevolent Department supplied the needy with means to purchase at the communal stores or made the purchases for them. Thus the poor became customers of the Provisioning Department as well as those who had their own resources.

6. *Financial Methods*

To understand the financial methods one must bear in mind that purchases of foodstuffs outside the occupied territories were necessarily made with gold, and that these foodstuffs when resold were paid for in local paper currency issue, all metal money and gold reserves having disappeared, and most of the pre-war currency having been supplanted by local banking issues which were obviously not convertible into gold. Moreover, the export of these notes to Allied countries, and, in fact, of any form of securities, was prohibited by the German authorities. If there had been no economic or legal restrictions on exchange, the Provisioning Department, with a moderate working capital, would have revolved on itself. As it stood, however, it could only revolve in so far as the local currency could be interpreted into gold. With a view to solving this problem to some extent and to effecting other beneficial results, the C.R.B. obtained some slight relaxation of restrictions imposed by the belligerent governments, so that persons or institutions abroad who wished to make payments in Belgium could hand to the C.R.B. gold values abroad, and the organization undertook to make payments of corresponding sums in Belgium. These payments at a fixed rate of exchange were made in paper currency received from the sale of foodstuffs. In this form of commercial exchange no actual money or securities of any kind passed over the frontier, as the foodstuffs imported served as the implement of exchange.

The financial methods as applied in Belgium differed from those in Northern France for a number of reasons. The following represent the operations in Belgium:

Foodstuffs were acquired with gold abroad by:

a) Purchases with gift money, or gifts received in kind.
b) Purchases with gold from commercial exchange.
c) Purchases with governmental subsidies.

The foodstuffs were sold in Belgium for local currency, and provided:

a) Subsidies to the benevolent committees and benevolent institutions.
b) Liquidation of exchange described above.
c) Advances to savings and loan institutions, etc.

The expense of caring for the destitute was then partially covered by gifts from the public of money and food from abroad and partially by the surplus of the Provisioning Department. The amount available from these sources was by no means sufficient, and the Provisioning Department supplied out of its resources in local currency the additional amounts as required. These additional advances to the Benevolent Department were debited against the government subsidies. In the later stages when the amount of gifts became small proportionally to the total cost of relief, the Benevolent Department's requirements were largely provided through government subsidies.

In Northern France economic life was so disorganized and the restriction of the occupying army so rigid that the administration of relief consisted in placing a ration adapted to local needs in the hands of every man, woman, and child. The C.R.B. made no general appeal for charitable funds[2] for the people of Northern France. All the inhabitants were considered as destitute, and rich and poor alike were dependent on provisions imported by the C.R.B. through the use of subsidies granted by the French Government. The C.R.B. charged the whole of the imported foodstuffs to the district committees, at fixed prices. The district committees, in turn, sold the foodstuffs to the communal committees at a small advance sufficient to cover the cost of local redistribution. The communes, in turn, resold the foodstuffs, without profit, to the population. Since the normal currency had disappeared each communal government printed its own notes of from 20 centimes up to 50 francs. This currency was put into circulation by the communes in payment for communal services, in loans to individuals against property, and in benevolence to the destitute. Under the latter two classes sufficient advances were made to enable the population to live. Communal committees, in accepting this local currency in payment for the ration of foodstuffs, became possessed of local communal currency representing the value of the foodstuffs issued. The committee then surrendered these notes to the communal authorities against obligation of the commune to pay an equivalent sum after the war. The district committees accepted these communal obligations, and in turn handed them to the C.R.B. against deliveries of food. In the hands of the C.R.B. these obligations, guaranteed by the individual members of the district committees, represented a form of acknowledgment for provisions purchased with government subsidies. The final liquidation of the pledged obligations of the communes, as well as the

[2] Certain special funds were collected for the relief of special classes, mainly undernourished children, and the C.R.B. distributed large quantities of gift clothing to relieve the distressing lack of textiles of all sorts in Northern France.

communal loans to individuals, both involving wide benevolent complications, became a matter for after-war consideration of the French Government.

As stated above, the C.R.B. fixed the price at which foodstuffs were debited to the district committees, at a rate slightly above the cost. The margin thus secured was a reserve against losses in transportation, by destruction, or deterioration, and a protection against fluctuations in exchange and food prices. As this reserve accumulated the Commission made rebates to the districts, which devoted the sums rebated to benevolent purposes. At the termination of relief operations the balance of reserve was employed for benevolence in Northern France in the same manner.

7. *Sources of Funds*

Funds secured by the C.R.B. for financing the provisioning and benevolent sides of the relief enterprise fall into four classifications according to their origin:

a) Government subsidies
b) Commercial exchange
c) World charity
d) Operating surplus

Government subsidies advanced to the C.R.B. by the United States, British, and French Governments in the form of loans to Belgium and to France reached the total of $700,540,443.38. The following tables segregate this total according to source and application:

GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES

Period	French Francs	Sterling	Florins	Dollars	Total Equivalent Dollars
"First Year" Nov., 1914–Oct., 1915	227,500,000	7,100,000	.....	.....	$ 75,586,648
"Second Year" Nov., 1915–Oct., 1916	307,500,000	6,500,000	.....	.....	101,985,364
"Third Year" Nov., 1916–Oct., 1917	376,250,000	5,250,000	.....	$ 70,000,000	161,442,048
"Fourth Year" Nov., 1917–Oct., 1918	.....	.....	.....	180,000,000	180,000,000
"Fifth Year" Nov., 1918–Aug., 1919	.....	.....	.....	136,632,260	136,632,260
European Advances Credits, etc.	.....	8,689,876	5,750,000	.....	44,894,123
Totals	911,250,000	27,539,876	5,750,000	$386,632,260	$700,540,443

NOTE: Dollar subsidies from U.S. Treasury began with the month of June, 1917, at which date monthly subsidies from British and French treasuries ceased. European expenditures of the Commission from June, 1917, onward were liquidated through credits established through the British Treasury and periodic cash advances by both British and French treasuries.

ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES

Monthly Advances as Loans to Belgium and France	For Belgian Account	For French Account	Total Subsidies
From United States Treasury	$259,632,260	$127,000,000	$386,632,260
From British Treasury	94,181,411	14,863,918	109,045,329
From French Treasury	94,181,411	110,681,443	204,862,854
Totals	$447,995,082	$252,545,361	$700,540,443

Under the classification of Commercial Exchange the C.R.B. secured a total of $6,328,328.50 represented by more than 100,000 remittances by individuals and institutions all over the world to friends in Belgium.

World charity in cash and gifts in kind amounted to a total of $52,290,835.51 as shown below:

Summary of World Charity[3]

I. Cash donations	$20,490,322
II. Value of gifts in kind	31,800,513
Total world charity	$52,290,835

Analysis according to Country of Origin

From the United States	$34,521,027	66.0%
From the British Empire	16,641,035	31.8%
From general sources	1,128,773	2.2%
	$52,290,835	100.0%

These moneys derived from these three sources constituted the basic capital of the Commission and were applied to the purchase and transportation of relief goods, for the general support of the relief organization, for remittances, and for support of the destitute. Through the financial methods previously described additional sums became available for the support of the destitute. These sums were the operating surplus and profits of the Provisioning Department and were derived in a large measure through the original sale of goods to the Comité National and the Comité Français. The margin on secondary sales by the Comité National to its subcommittees also contributed a substantial sum, as did incidental operations of the Provisioning Department outside the occupied territories. As will be seen, the level of prices to those who could pay, in the occupied territories, was the lowest in Europe during the war, yet the surplus and profits of the Provisioning Department amounted to $135,637,543.21. In this figure are reflected the voluntary service of members of the C.R.B. and the concessions and special privileges granted to the relief by individuals and by railways, steamships, telegraph, insurance, and brokerage companies all over the world. The following table shows the amount and origin of these funds:

I. Operation Surplus of Provisioning Department
Includes surplus on sales within Belgium and France and profits of the C.R.B. outside the occupied territories..... $111,704,000

[3] For detailed analyses see Documents 597, 598, and 599, chapter xv.

II. Profits earned inside Belgium	
Profits transferred to the C.R.B. by the Comité National..	23,933,543
Total	$135,637,543

Funds secured from the four sources described above and disbursed by the Commission amounted to $894,797,150.40.[4] From the first moment of its existence the officers of the Commission realized their responsibility in the stewardship of this great enterprise. At once, therefore, they placed the actual record of accounting as well as auditing of every department in the hands of an internationally known firm of accountants. Furthermore, complete statistical commodity records were maintained paralleling and expanding the accounting in all phases.

8. *Foodstuff Purchases and Gifts*

Excluding the native products of Belgium and Northern France which were controlled by the relief organization, the C.R.B. transported to the occupied territories over five million tons of relief supplies from 1914 to 1919. The program of importations of over 100,000 tons each month consisted chiefly of bread grains, cereals, and fats, which, for reasons of economy, were purchased in large quantities in primary markets. At certain times, however, some of the centers of production were inaccessible because of war conditions, and after 1917 the C.R.B. was forced to conform to the Allied policy which concentrated shipping, in the service of supplies, in the Atlantic. The following table shows the country of origin of imported relief supplies, including purchases as well as gifts:

	Metric Tons	
United States	3,116,271	60.2%
Canada	1,000,666	19.4%
Argentine	418,046	8.1%
United Kingdom	198,047	3.8%
Other countries	441,401	8.5%
Total	5,174,431	100.0%

The amount of imports[5] each year and the costs were:

	Metric Tons	Total Cost
First	983,808	$ 68,924,221
Second	1,300,322	116,055,602
Third	724,175	115,297,780
Fourth	1,091,178	244,781,219
Fifth	1,074,948	261,150,491
Warehousing, Insurance of Stocks	.....	1,481,628
Totals	5,174,431	$807,690,941

[4] Practically all the currencies of the world entered into the financial accounting of the Commission. In order to simplify the bookkeeping the following exchange ratios were maintained during the active period of the Commission, realized differences being charged to an exchange account:

$4.85 = £1 = Frs. 25.40 = Fls. 12.03

[5] Including the tonnage and value of gifts in kind as well as purchases.

In addition to the quantities shown above, the C.R.B. purchased over 200,000 metric tons of supplies which never reached Belgium and Northern France. Cargoes damaged or sunk accounted for 114,000 metric tons; and 95,000 metric tons of relief supplies in warehouses in England and France, at the outbreak of the unrestricted submarine warfare, were sold by the C.R.B. on government orders to avoid complete loss by deterioration.[6]

Imports included large amounts of food and clothing donated in response to the appeals of the various relief committees. In the early days many of these gifts in kind, which originated in North America, were turned over to the C.R.B. in shipload lots, but for the most part committees throughout the United States and Canada collected small parcels. The C.R.B. freely undertook the transportation of these gifts in food and clothing from all inland points, thus further increasing the labors of the transportation departments of its main branches.

After the first year of operation, the administrative burden of distributing innumerable classes of gift foods forced the C.R.B. to ask that gifts in kind be limited to the staples which comprised its program, eliminating the so-called luxuries, such as tinned foods. Appeal committees and the public throughout the world co-operated wholeheartedly in this policy, with the result that their support became mainly financial, except in the fourth and fifth years when the immensely valuable contribution of used clothing was made.

GIFTS IN KIND

(*Metric tons*)

Year	Food	Clothing	Total	Value
First	91,296	2,077	93,373	$ 9,047,807
Second	12,893	356	13,249	1,015,816
Third	4,598	66	4,664	460,941
Fourth	124	2,341	2,465	1,031,592
Fifth	135	7,569	7,704	20,210,644
Totals	109,046	12,409	121,455	$31,766,800

As all supplies imported into Belgium and Northern France were issued in quantity below the normal human demand, it was obvious that the introduction of inferior articles would inflict peculiar hardship. The ordinary safeguard of quality, namely, the inability of the retail merchant to dispose of inferior goods, did not exist, and it was essential to employ every means to maintain the very highest quality obtainable. Merchants throughout the world co-operated in furnishing only first-class products, and the result was a remarkable freedom from complaint. As additional safeguards the New York and Rotterdam offices each maintained a staff of inspectors, and every shipment underwent closest scrutiny.

[6] Cargoes were fully insured and the forced sales of provisions were profitable so that there was no loss of funds to relief.

9. *Oversea Shipping*

The ships of the C.R.B. always enjoyed the promise of immunity, but since to reach Rotterdam they had to pass through the Allied blockade and through seas where the naval conflict, largely under water, was most intense, this immunity was never secured without compliance with restrictions laid down by both belligerents. The first charters were neutral steamers, but the C.R.B. at an early date obtained German guarantees of immunity to any vessel carrying relief for Belgium and flying the C.R.B. flag. At the outset charters were readily obtained at a price, but it was not long before the C.R.B. found itself competing with Allied and neutral governments who were pressed for ships to transport supplies for civilian and military needs. The food program of the C.R.B. was 110,000 tons each month, representing over 133,000 dead weight ships tonnage. Since the average round trip occupied over two months for each vessel, the C.R.B. required a continuously operating fleet of almost 290,000 dead weight tons or 58 steamers of 5,000 tons. The vessels it actually secured were smaller than this, and for long periods the C.R.B. was managing a fleet numbering between 60 and 70 vessels. The following table indicates the shipping accomplishments of the C.R.B. during the five years of relief:

Year	Loaded Voyages		Net Cargo (*Metric tons*)
	Overseas	Cross-Channel	
First	150	344	983,808
Second	240	485	1,300,322
Third	144	226	724,175
Fourth	223	128	1,091,178
Fifth	236	137	1,074,948
Totals	993	1,320	5,174,431

The C.R.B. adopted the usual commercial practice regarding insurance of vessels and cargoes, marine risks being placed with Lloyd's and with New York underwriters, and war risk with the British war risk bureaus. In 1917, however, at the request of the Belgian and French Governments, the C.R.B. carried its own insurance setting up an insurance reserve for this purpose.

In a marine transportation operation of this magnitude losses were bound to occur even in normal times; in time of war the hazards were much more numerous. Actually C.R.B. vessels to the number of 52 met with accidents as shown in the following summary:

Vessels torpedoed		17
Vessels mined		14
Vessels torpedoed or mined		3
Vessels fired on by submarine		3
Collisions and miscellaneous accidents		15
Total accidents		52
Vessels lost	38	
Vessels or cargoes damaged	14	
Cargo lost	114,000 tons	

10. *Port Operations*

The purchase of food in the primary markets of the world, transshipment by rail to loading ports, and loading on C.R.B. ships for overseas demanded extensive organization. The New York office of the C.R.B. was responsible for goods assembled in the United States and Canada, from which over 60 per cent of relief provisions came. The London office handled cargoes from the Argentine, India, and elsewhere and was responsible also for the purchase and transshipment of provisions from the United Kingdom.

The continuous stream of cargoes dispatched from many ports by these two C.R.B. offices converged at the port of Rotterdam. This neutral port, with its excellent harbor, modern cargo handling, and warehouse facilities and direct canal and rail connection with Belgium and Northern France was the C.R.B. transshipment port for most of the relief period. Twenty or thirty deep-water relief cargoes were unloaded each month in addition to many smaller cross-channel boats. The C.R.B. Rotterdam office was a busy organization with a variety of duties which included the management of grain elevators and other discharging equipment, renting of warehouses, chartering of lighters and tugs and arranging rail shipment for the interior, and the purchase of Holland produce. There was no relaxation of careful business methods. On the arrival of the oversea carrier, lighters were immediately brought alongside and discharge commenced under the supervision of Dutch customs and C.R.B. inspectors.

After the Armistice the C.R.B. used the French port of Dunkirk for a short time, but as soon as possible after the German evacuation the Belgian port of Antwerp became the C.R.B.'s principal transshipment port. The quantities of relief provisions passing through these three ports and Lille are given below:

	Metric Tons
Rotterdam, November, 1914, to August, 1919	4,686,359
Dunkirk, December, 1918, to April, 1919	15,826
Antwerp, January, 1919, to August, 1919	462,502
Lille, November, 1918, to May, 1919	9,744
Total relief supplies	5,174,431

11. *Transshipment of Relief Supplies*

Belgium and, in fact, Northern France are traversed by a network of canals, railways, and tram lines and, as can be seen on the accompanying map, this network is readily accessible from the C.R.B.'s base port of Rotterdam. At the outset of relief the canals in many places had been blocked, locks blown up, bridges dropped into canals, ships and lighters sunk, and railway bridges and track demolished. Lighters and rolling stock remaining in Belgium were requisitioned by the Germans. It required months to put the transportation in shape to handle the great quantities of relief supplies crossing the frontier into Belgium. Some main canals never came into service.

By far the greater portion of relief the C.R.B. transshipped in lighters through the canal system. Some few centers were inaccessible, and to these rail shipments were necessary. Three main canal arteries lead from Holland into Belgium. The first from Terneuzen to Ghent carried 1,200-ton lighters. The second artery follows the Zeeland waters and the Scheldt to Antwerp, Brussels, and Louvain and the third from Rotterdam via Dordrecht into Limbourg and beyond. Canals and railways led to milling centers and to regional warehouses from whence subsidiary canals and tram lines distributed goods in smaller quantities to communal stores throughout the entire relief area. In order to handle the inland waterway transportation the relief organization created a ship-owning department which at the height of its development owned or leased on long-time charter 80 per cent of its requirements, i.e. a fleet of 495 lighters and 36 tugs. Transshipment of provisions from ports during the five years required 14,000 lighter loads of 400 tons to 1,200 tons and over 8,000 train shipments comprising 30,000 truck loads. Aside from the importation of oversea supplies, the relief organization was responsible for the movement of native crops and local produce throughout the interior and in addition handled the transport of coal from mines to the relief flour mills and delivered bunker coal to Rotterdam for C.R.B. ships.

As far as relief importations were concerned the C.R.B. Brussels office directed the shipments from transshipment ports except in case of goods for Belgian and French refugees or other purposes outside the occupied areas. The following table shows the distribution of goods from C.R.B. transshipment ports:

SHIPMENTS OF RELIEF SUPPLIES

(Metric tons)

Port	Belgium	Northern France	Other Destinations	Total
Rotterdam	3,517,467	1,031,727	137,165	4,686,359
Antwerp	376,774	34,983	50,745	462,502
Dunkirk	.....	15,826	.....	15,826
Lille	700	9,044	.....	9,744
Totals	3,894,941	1,091,580	187,910	5,174,431

12. *Delivery to the Consumer*

The first interior destinations for imports were the central and regional warehouses, some 200 in number, and the flour mills. From these allocations were made to the 4,731 communal stores presided over by communal committees. Until the Germans withdrew in October 1918 the relief organization maintained an elaborate statistical stock control not only to insure equitable distribution but as a constant check against leakages. Imports and local produce together were never more than sufficient, and all supplies were therefore jealously guarded by the civilian inhabitants for their own consumption. The following figures summarize the food consumption

in the communes for the four years of German occupation and include both C.R.B. importations and native wheat flour and produce controlled and distributed by the relief organization:

FOOD SUPPLIES CONSUMED IN FOUR YEARS
NOVEMBER, 1914–OCTOBER, 1918

(*Metric tons*)

	Belgium	Northern France
Flour	2,387,548	398,671
Maize	266,756	20,822
Rice	144,658	69,006
Beans and peas	79,890	32,969
Bacon and meat	59,432	51,369
Lard	88,929	50,638
Milk	9,809	33,242
Sugar	....	24,983
Coffee	7,324	20,845
Soap	....	14,175
Sundries	104,413	51,102

Bread was rationed in both Belgium and Northern France as were all other food commodities in the latter region. Belgian rural districts were largely self-supporting except for bread, and therefore other relief imports were reserved for and rationed only in the Belgian cities. The initial control of bread-rationing began with the relief flour mills. Since over 65 per cent of C.R.B. imports were breadstuffs in the form of wheat and maize, it was obviously necessary for the relief organization to exercise complete control over mills and milling. Milling rates were fixed and the percentage of mixture of native flour and maize flour strictly controlled. The milling of wheat for the first year was 82 per cent and the second year 82 per cent and 90 per cent, while during a large part of the third and fourth years, the milling was 97 per cent owing to the very restricted supply of wheat.[7]

The milled flour was allocated according to requirements throughout the country, and shipments were made from the mills to the regional depots and to the communes on a pro rata basis. All the milling for Northern France was done in Belgium whence shipments were made to French centers of distribution.

The method of detailed distribution of breadstuffs varied in the different provinces and districts. Originally, the communal com-

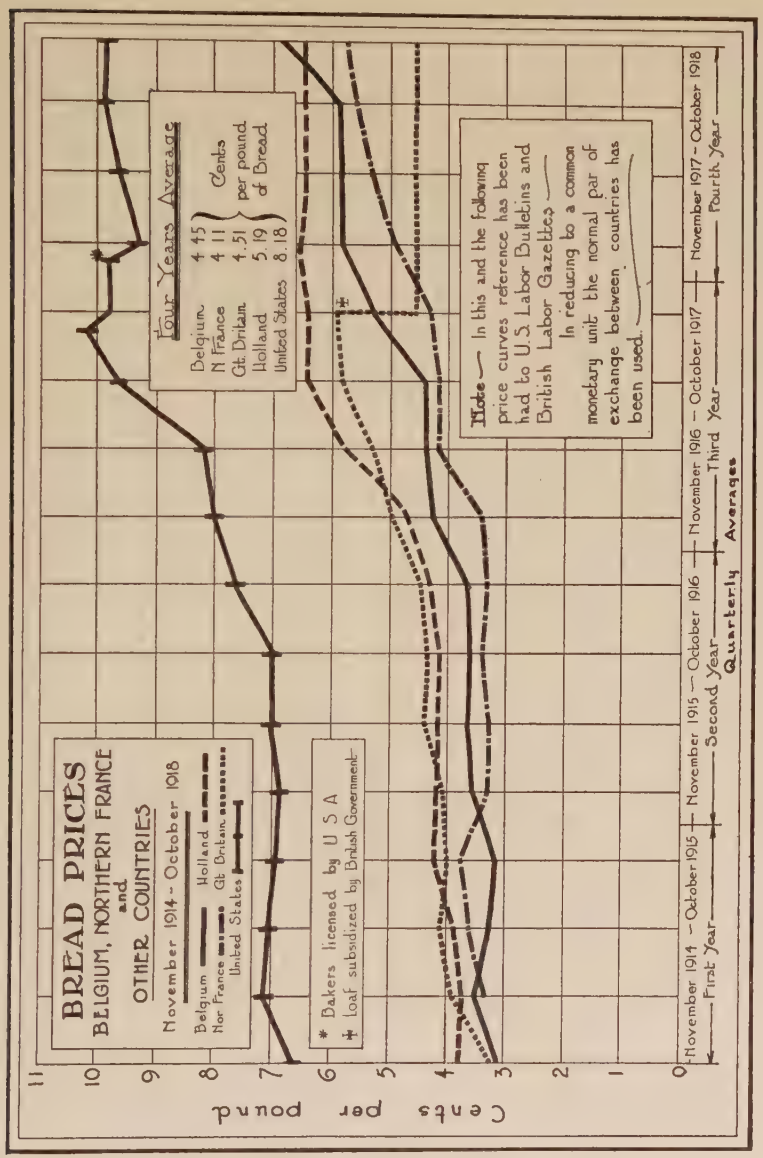
[7] Much discussion took place as to the effect, upon the population, of bread produced from this percentage of milling but investigation did not definitely establish deleterious results. Wide differences of opinion also existed both in Belgium and abroad as to the economics of importing wheat flour rather than wheat. In certain sections milling facilities were not available, and therefore no objection was raised against importing white flour. On the other hand, certain sections were destitute of foodstuffs for cattle and preferred to receive wheat in order that they might have the by-products. The employment given to Belgian mills and their workmen and the useful production of fodder were factors which had to be weighed. Maize mills at Louvain and Boom milled 2,000 tons of maize flour per month and produced large quantities of hominy, cerealine, and oil cake.

mittees issued the flour from their communal warehouses to accredited bakers, who were required to submit lists of customers for approval to the communal committee, which then issued supplies on a ration per capita of baker's customers. The allowance of flour was usually at the rate of 250 grams per customer, and from this amount the baker in turn normally produced 335 grams of bread, a differential being made to the baker between the charge made to him for the flour and price at which he sold the bread sufficient to cover the necessary cost of the other ingredients and of labor.[8] Each individual or family received a bread card, which had to be produced to procure bread on the delivery days, usually every third day.

Whereas bread was distributed to the population on a two- or three-day ration, the other commodities were issued on a weekly ration. In Belgium these other commodities, such as rice, peas and beans, bacon and lard, were chiefly intended for the destitute and for those least able to pay the high prices prevailing for such native foodstuffs as were available. The control was as rigid as for flour and bread, in order that no one might receive more than his share. An individual received a ration card entitling him to these commodities only after determination of his position and need. The prices at which imported and rationed foodstuffs were sold to the consumer varied directly with the cost to the Commission. There were three stages in the transaction: (*a*) cost price to the Commission, (*b*) selling price by the Commission to the Comité National, and (*c*) retail prices to the consumer. The margin between successive prices, as has been mentioned, was established to create a reserve against losses or deterioration and to build up a fund for benevolent expenditure. Prices in Belgium were not controlled in the sense of being subsidized—as, for instance, bread was in England —but were varied from time to time to meet changing cost conditions, and thus the general trend of prices necessarily followed that of world prices.

The price of bread was fixed periodically according to the cost of ingredients. The cost of imported wheat and flour, of native flour, and imported maize and rice, were all factors in the bread prices. As wheat became scarce milling rates were increased, and considerable quantities of both maize and rice flour were mixed with the wheat flour, producing a cheaper bread. The loaf was generally cheaper in Northern France than in Belgium, owing to higher milling in the flour and a greater percentage of flour substitute in the form of maize resulting in a black but nourishing bread. Taken over the four years the Belgian paid less than 4½ cents per pound of bread, which was considerably the lowest average price of unsubsidized war-bread in the world.

[8] A different system was proposed by the Commission and was adopted in several provinces and districts. Under this the local committees delivered the flour to bakers under contract which provided that 135 kilos of good bread must be produced from 100 kilos of flour, weighing taking place at a specified time after baking. The bakers in this case delivered bread to a depot in quantities sufficient to serve the inhabitants of the area. In this way there was a better check on both quantity and quality.


BREAD PRICES
BELGIUM, NORTHERN FRANCE and OTHER COUNTRIES
November 1914 - October 1918
Belgium
Holland
Nor France
Gt Britain
United States
Four Years Averages
Belgium 4 45
N France 4 11
Gt Britain 4.51
Holland 5.19
United States 8.18
Cents per pound of Bread
* Bakers licensed by U S A
† Loaf subsidized by British Government
Note — In this and the following price curves reference has been had to U.S. Labor Bulletins and British Labor Gazettes — In reducing to a common monetary unit the normal par of exchange between countries has been used.
Cents per pound
November 1914 - October 1915 — First Year
November 1915 - October 1916 — Second Year
November 1916 - October 1917 — Third Year
November 1917 - October 1918 — Fourth Year
Quarterly Averages

13. *The Care of the Destitute*

Second only to the procurement of food for the entire population was the task of insuring just distribution to rich and poor alike. The organization structure of the Benevolent Department, whose duty this was, paralleled that of the Provisioning Department, and, as with the latter, the communal committees were the principal agencies. These communal charity committees, side by side with the communal committees concerned with provisioning, were responsible for the general problem of destitution. Supplementing their efforts there were a great number of special committees created to care for particular phases of distress not reached by the communal committees. Both groups of committees were controlled by the central organization through subvention and inspection. In addition to this committee organization for the care of the destitute, public services and state institutions supported by funds of the Benevolent Department performed similar functions. Some of this support was for economic and financial relief carried out with government subsidies. Although these advances were to be liquidated after the war, yet during the occupation they had a benevolent aspect.

The committee organization as outlined above applied to both Belgium and Northern France, but in the latter country the obligations of individual beneficiaries to repay the French Government were left for settlement after the war. In Belgium the system employed was much more complex, as it required that the degree of dependency of beneficiaries be determined from day to day, and except in the case of economic relief in which the Belgian Government was interested, the relief organization left little for subsequent settlement.

Services maintained by the Benevolent Department out of public charity included: breadlines, canteens, clothing for the destitute, provision of temporary shelters, all of which were administered by the communal charity committees. From the same source of funds special committees provided assistance to children, refugees, laceworkers, foreigners, young mothers, persons dispossessed, and many others. From funds drawn against government subsidies the public services and institutions paid separation allowances, pensions, supplementary allowances to the destitute, advances to loan societies and savings banks, and advances to educational institutions.

The principal benevolent outlay was for the support of canteens, soup kitchens, and cheap restaurants, of which one or more were established in every commune supplying meals, free or at nominal cost, directly to the people. Next in amount were cash advances to individuals and to classes, and subsidies to institutions whereby additional numbers were enabled to purchase their requirements from the communal stores. To furnish assistance of a different character the relief organization established and maintained central and subsidiary factories and workrooms for renovating great quantities of clothing and making new garments for free distribution, or at nominal cost.

Of the special benevolent activities the care of children was per-

haps the most important, and the organization for this purpose reached a high degree of excellence. Not only were supplementary meals served in all schools, but the younger children, babies, and nursing mothers were supplied with milk through canteens established in every commune.

The co-operating organizations expended over $615,000,000 on their programs of benevolence in Belgium and Northern France. As the years of German occupation passed, the people became more dependent on soup kitchens and canteens for their food, and charitable expenditures of the central committees increased. The peak of distress was reached in 1918, as the annual expenditures[9] in Belgium of the Comité National show:

General Benevolent Expenditure through the Comité National, Belgium, 1914 to 1919

	Annual Disbursement	Average Monthly Expenditure during Year
1914— 2 months	$ 1,169,135	$ 584,568
1915—12 months	63,262,118	5,273,510
1916—12 months	76,711,991	6,392,665
1917—12 months	100,196,325	8,349,694
1918—12 months	181,572,040	15,131,033
1919— 8 months	86,963,515	10,857,939
Total	$509,875,124	

14. *Accounts and Statistics*

I. Funds Received by the C.R.B.

U.S. Treasury. Subsidies	$386,632,260.44	
American Charity	34,521,026.99	
Total American Sources		$421,153,287.43
British Treasury. Subsidies	$109,045,328.73	
British Empire Charity	16,641,034.85	
Total British Empire Sources		125,686,363.58
French Treasury. Subsidies		204,862,854.21
General Charity		1,128,773.67
Remittances. Commercial Exchange		6,328,328.30
Operating Surplus		135,637,543.21
Grand Total Funds Received by the C.R.B.		$894,797,150.40

[9] Total benevolent expenditures through the separate central organizations were:

C.R.B.	$ 71,805,495.37
Comité National	509,875,123.67
Comité Français	33,556,528.43

II. Operating Account. Provisioning Department

A. PROVISIONS SECURED

Value of Provisions. 5,174,431 metric tons			$642,451,917.81
Transport Expense			165,239,023.32
Charges on 20,000,000 Rations (British War Office)			4,377,650.26
Total Provisions			$812,068,591.39
Overhead and Administration. 0.43 per cent			3,908,892.74
Total Charges			$815,977,484.13
Surplus on Sales (including profits on transactions entirely outside Belgium and France) Available for Benevolence			111,704,000.95
Total Operations. Provisioning Department			$927,681,485.08

B. PROVISIONS DISTRIBUTED

Belgian Account			
To Occupied Belgium	3,894,941 tons	....	$639,692,817.25
To Belgian Refugees in Holland and Havre	1,239 tons	....	1,363,876.44
Total Belgian Account	3,896,180 tons	....	$641,056,693.69
Northern France Account			
To Invaded Northern France	1,091,580 tons	....	$220,203,521.62
To French Refugees in Holland	299 tons	....	80,028.90
Total French Account	1,091,879 tons	....	$220,283,550.52
Other Destinations			
To German Government (1919)	134,980 tons	....	$ 44,350,810.47
To U.S. Grain Corporation and American Relief Administration	5,086 tons	....	4,486,570.10
To Dutch Government (returned)	16,903 tons	....	.....
Miscellaneous Sales and Transshipment Losses	1,601 tons	....	2,429.77
Bunker Coal and Damaged Goods (sales credited to provisions)	27,802 tons	....	.....
Total Other Destinations	186,372 tons	....	$ 48,839,810.34
20,000,000 Rations (British War Office)			$ 4,377,650.26
Sundry Credit Balances			
Foodstuffs Sunk En Route (114,000 tons)			$ 7,634,673.21
Foodstuffs Sold En Route (95,096 tons)			2,913,076.27
Sundry Operations			686,601.21
Interest and Exchange			1,889,429.58
Total Sundry Credit Balances			$ 13,123,780.27
Total Operations. Provisioning Department			$927,681,485.08

III. Benevolent Account. Benevolent Department

A. FUNDS AVAILABLE

World Charity	$ 52,290,835.51
Provisioning Department Surplus (C.R.B.)	111,704,000.95
Provisioning Department Surplus (Comité National)	23,933,542.26
Benevolent Account of C.R.B.	$187,928,378.72
State Aid (derived from Government Subsidies and dispensed in charity, and financial and economic relief)	427,308,768.75
Grand Total Benevolent Account	$615,237,147.47

B. FUNDS DISBURSED[10]

Belgium	
General Benevolent Program (during relief period)	$524,620,818.05
Gifts to Belgian Universities and Educational Foundations[11]	33,766,039.62
Northern France	
General Benevolent Program	54,782,601.85
Northern Relief	
Clothing (distributed by the American Relief Administration in Poland and Czechoslovakia)	2,067,687.95
Grand Total Benevolent Account	$615,237,147.47

[10] Detailed analyses of benevolent expenditures through the C.R.B., Comité National, and Comité Français are given in chapter xvi, pp. 352–354.

[11] See chapter xiii, p. 212.

IV. Commodities Imported by the C.R.B. October 1914–August 1919

(*Metric tons*)

Commodity	PROVISIONS SECURED			PROVISIONS DISTRIBUTED					
	Purchased	Donated	Total	To Occupied Belgium	To Belgian Refugees Holland Havre	To Invaded France	To French Refugees Holland	To Other Destinations	Total
Wheat, Barley, Rye	2,895,339	27,852	2,923,191	2,397,456	....	466,027	150	59,558	2,923,191
Flour	380,110	47,994	428,104	335,608	....	75,788	25	16,683	428,104
Bacon	151,035	683	151,718	75,438	54	51,067	12	25,147	151,718
Lard	226,340	....	226,340	148,709	3	72,372	8	5,248	226,340
Maize	438,234	13,550	451,784	404,431	....	42,834	..	4,519	451,784
Rice	337,249	2,426	339,675	215,411	....	102,030	14	22,220	339,675
Beans, Peas	188,881	3,618	192,499	122,105	....	49,312	17	21,065	192,499
Yeast Materials	11,662	....	11,662	10,920	....	691	..	51	11,662
Butter, Cheese	6,803	....	6,803	3,632	....	3,165	..	6	6,803
Cocoa	13,131	....	13,131	5,882	....	6,988	..	261	13,131
Coffee	41,975	....	41,975	11,911	....	29,994	4	66	41,975
Fish	21,964	....	21,964	16,777	....	5,186	1	....	21,964
Meat	37,708	....	37,708	18,313	....	13,941	9	5,445	37,708
Milk	81,677	....	81,677	26,890	279	53,731	21	756	81,677
Soap	39,140	....	39,140	14,490	....	24,621	18	11	39,140
Sugar	51,244	....	51,244	1,517	....	49,505	2	220	51,244
Sundry Foodstuffs	79,619	12,123	91,742	65,018	....	25,973	..	751	91,742
Clothing	11,360	12,409	23,769	15,870	284	6,630	18	958	23,769
Miscellaneous	37,851	800	38,651	3,005	619	11,716	..	23,311	38,651
Benzine, Oil, Grease	1,654	....	1,654	1,558	....	....	..	96	1,654
Totals	5,052,976	121,455	5,174,431	3,894,941	1,239	1,091,580	299	186,372	5,174,431

Map of Belgium and Northern France Showing Geographic Divisions and Distributing System During Relief Period

Appendix II

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF DOCUMENTS

DATE	NAME	GENERAL SUBJECT	DOC. NO.	PAGE
1914				
Sept.				
17	v. d. Goltz to Whitlock	Non-requisition of relief supplies	1	I: 6
19	v. Lüttwitz to Shaler	Passes for relief imports	618	II: 374
Oct.				
1	Gibson to de Lalaing	British export permits	2	I: 6
1	Gibson for Belgian F.O.	Support of relief enterprise	3	I: 7
6	Press Dispatch	Shaler's mission for Comité Central	544	II: 239
6	Page to Bryan	U.S. diplomatic co-operation	4	I: 7
13	Hoover to Amer. Press	American support for Belgian relief	6	I: 9
14	Hoover to Amer. Press	American support for Belgian relief	545	II: 240
16	v. d. Goltz Guarantee	Non-requisition of relief imports	7	I: 10
16	Same	Same (German text)	—	II: 375
16	Whitlock to Bryan	U.S. diplomatic co-operation	8	I: 11
16	Whitlock to President	American support for Belgian relief	9	I: 12
16	German F.O. to Gerard	German approval of Belgian relief	10	I: 12
17	Statement to Press	Proposed organization of C.R.B.	546	II: 240
20	Lansing to Whitlock	Official U.S. approval	11	I: 13
20	British F.O. to Page	Non-interference with shipments	12	I: 13
20	Hoover to Page	Analysis of Belgian relief problem	13	I: 13
20	Hoover to Whitlock	Organization of Belgian relief	14	I: 16
22	Minutes	First C.R.B. meeting	15	I: 16
22	Hoover to Amer. Press	C.R.B. organization; Amer. support	16	I: 17
22	Same	Same	547	II: 241
25	Whitlock to Page	C.R.B. organization	17	I: 19
25	Grey and Runciman	C.R.B. purchases and export permits	65	I: 120
26	Page to Runciman	British export permits	18	I: 19
26	Page to Sec. of State	C.R.B. sole channel for relief	19	I: 20
26	Same	Same	548	II: 243
26	Francqui to Hoover	Monthly import requirements	64	I: 119
26	Francqui to Hoover	Organization problems in Belgium	25	I: 31
26	Hoover to Mrs. Hoover	Pacific Coast support for C.R.B.	549	II: 247
27	Hoover to Chalmers	Chicago support for Belgian relief	550	II: 247
28	Hoover to Bates	C.R.B. organization in America	551	II: 248
29	Lucey to Hoover	Situation in Rotterdam and Belgium	24	I: 29
29	Queen Elisabeth Appeal	Support from American womanhood	554	II: 250
29	German Certificate	Non-requisition of relief imports	619	II: 375
30	Hoover to Bates	C.R.B. organization in America	552	II: 248
31	Hoover to Amer. Press	American support for Belgian relief	553	II: 249
31	Hoover to Mrs. Bates	Support from American womanhood	555	II: 251
Nov.				
2	Hoover to Governors	State support; state ships	556	II: 252
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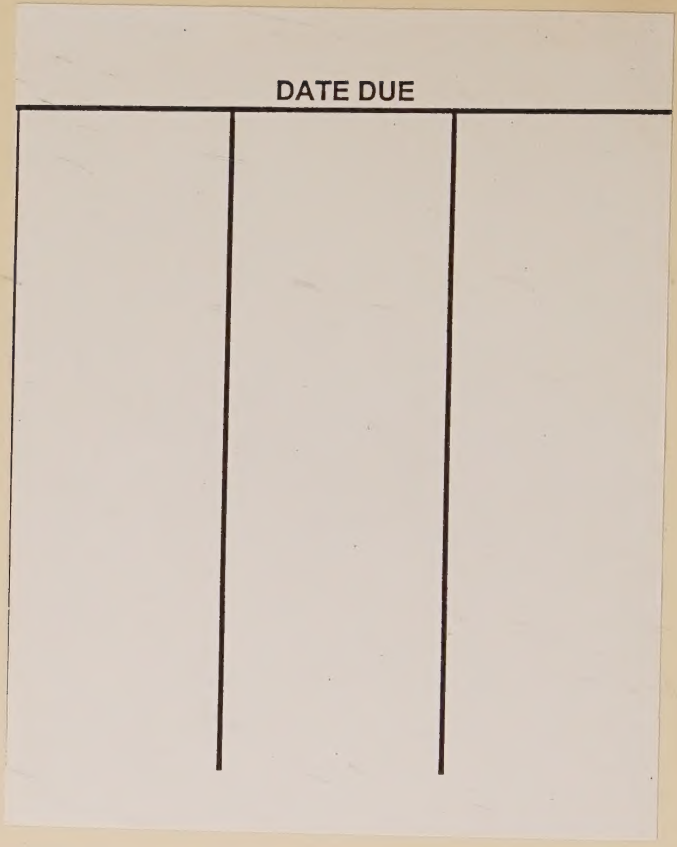
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